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Modern Iran

Peter Avery

Iran today is one of the world's leading oil producers, one of the West's best friends among Muslim nations, and, by virtue of its location, a land of strategic importance to both East and West.

Yet, throughout most of the nineteenth century, Iran was only a shadow nation —a remnant of the once great Persian Empire—preyed upon by its neighbors and by the great European powers. Drawing on a wealth of rare Persian sources, Mr. Avery tells of the emergence of modern Iran. A story full of political intrigues, it is a revealing anatomy of imperialism in its heyday. Russia, ever hungry for warmer lands and seaports, steadily harassed Iran from the north. Britain—wary of Russia and protective of India—wooed Iran with military pacts neatly wrapped around commercial exploitation. Both France and Germany tried eagerly to become the "disinterested" friend who would keep Britain and Russia from harming Iran. All this foreign interference, as Mr. Avery demonstrates, had a catalytic effect on Iranian social and political structures—as ultraconservative religious leaders, xenophilic merchants, and leaders of regional clans vied for power —influenced by Western ideas, or actively aided by Western nations.

MODERN IRAN outlines the many aspects of their struggle for power, and the many forms it took—how it manifested itself in the economy, in religion, in the nature of their demands upon the Shahs. In his analysis of Iran today—and his very perceptive study of the controversial former Prime Minister Dr. Mussadiq, Mr. Avery ably presents his thesis —that Iran is an extremely vital country and one about which the West can be optimistic, but that the tension between modernism and traditionalism is not yet resolved, and may well lead to outbreaks and clashes similar to those that have afflicted Turkey.

NATIONS OF THE MODERN WORLD

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NATIONS OF THE MODERN WORLD

MODERN IRAN

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Preface

IN WRITING a work intended primarily for the general reader, and not as a highly specialised, academic contribution, it has been difficult for the author to decide upon a system of transliteration of Persian names and titles etc. The question of transliteration is, in any event, these days somewhat in dispute. Many Iranians and some British students of their country are showing preference for transliterations which faithfully reflect present-day Persian pronunciation; while, in collaboration with American cartographical authorities, the Royal Geographical Society has been at pains to publish an enlightened list of transliterations based on current pronunciation, and which it may well be hoped might in future become standard. This author has much sympathy with these modern trends, but has eventually, though somewhat erratically, taken the older convention of transliteration as the one towards which to tend, especially for now obsolete titles and the names of people deceased. Nevertheless, so far as the names of living personalities are concerned, especially those with whom (and with whose views on the transliteration of their names) the author is acquainted, he has adopted a transliteration as close as possible to actual pronunciation; and he has sometimes found it difficult to use a rigid convention for place-names when it results in a spelling too remote from the sound of the name as he has always been accustomed to hearing it.

The opportunity is taken here to enter a caveat concerning the early history of the Qajar period. It seems to this writer that, with one so far unpublished exception, this period is only now beginning to receive the detailed attention of one or two, as it happens, younger scholars. This means that researches may shortly be available that will probably not only elucidate much that this book treats cursorily, but almost certainly bring more facts to light; although, as this work aims to indicate broad lines of development, it may be hoped that later researches will, in questions relating to the first half of the nineteenth century, not so much prove it seriously in error as show differences in emphasis.

It is the author's pleasant duty to acknowledge, with a gratitude in no instance the less because those to whom he owes it are mentioned in order of the amount of help they have given him, the

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following: Mrs. Catherine Clark, Mrs. H. E. Wulff, Mrs. Audrey Scott, Mr. Nigel Hancock of the Cambridge University Library, Dr. G. R. G. Hambly, Mr. N. M. L. Wade, and Dr. James Cargill Thompson. So much for help at home, with reference added to those bright spirits on U-Staircase (1963-4) in King's College who, by their friendship and interest, did much more than they may suppose to encourage the writing of this book. As for the author's Iranian friends and experience, it should be sufficiently obvious that basically it is to them that he owes the most, with the inclusion of at least five Europeans who shared with him his days in Iran; but here the giving of names would lead to prolixity and is therefore reluctantly not attempted.

King's College, Cambridge
January 1965

PETER AVERY

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Map

Iran and bordering countries *facing page* 506

Qajar Dynasty

I Aqa Muhammad Khan (1779–1797)
|
II Fath 'Ali Shah (1797–1834)
|
'Abbas
|
III Muhammad Shah (1834–1848)
|
IV Nasiru'd-Din Shah (1848–1896)
|
V Muzaffaru'd-Din Shah (1896–1907)
|
VI Muhammad 'Ali Shah (1907–1909)
|
VII Ahmad Shah (1909–1925)

Pahlavi Dynasty

I Riza Shah (1925–1941)
|
II Muhammad Riza Shah (1941–)

General Information

CALENDAR

In 1925 the Fifth Majlis enacted that the Solar Calendar should be used in preference to the Lunar Calendar of the Hijra, Muslim Era. The latter is still followed by the religious authorities for establishing the dates of religious feasts, ceremonies etc. The Solar Calendar has 365 days in twelve months, of which the first six months have 31 days each, the following five 30 days each, while the twelfth month has 29 days, or 30 days in leap-years. The months of the Solar Calendar are as follows, with their English equivalents:

Farvardin	21 March – 20 April	31 days
Urdibehesht	21 April – 21 May	
Khurdad	22 May – 21 June	
Tir	22 June – 22 July	
Murdad	23 July – 22 August	
Shahrivar	23 August – 22 September	
Mihr	23 September – 22 October	30 days
Aban	23 October – 21 November	
Azar	22 November – 21 December	
Dey	22 December – 20 January	
Bahman	21 January – 19 February	
Isfand	20 February – 20 March	29 days (in leap-years 30 days)

New Year's Day, 1st Farvardin, corresponds to 21st or 22nd March, the Spring Equinox, and is the signal for a holiday of several days, being Iran's most important festival.

The Solar Year may be converted to years of the Christian Era by the following formula:

Solar Year + 621 = Year of the Christian Era,

though, owing to the later beginning of the Iranian year, the equivalent year in the Christian Era may either be the result of this sum or this result + 1, according to the month in the Iranian Solar Year to which the date refers.

The Lunar Year of the Muslim Era has 354 days, and may be approximately converted into Years of the Christian Era by the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Lunar Year}}{1{\cdot}031} + 622 = \text{Year of the Christian Era (approximately).}$$

CURRENCY

The principal units of currency in terms in present-day use are the *rial* and the *toman*; the latter comprises 10 *rials*. The trading rate for the £ sterling is 210 *rials* (21 *tomans*), the selling rate 214.2 *rials*. In relation to the United States dollar the equivalent rates are 75 and 76.5 respectively. It may be of use to the foreign visitor to Iran to remember that Iranians do not as a rule reckon sums of money in *rials* but in *tomans*, in which prices over 10 *rials* are normally expressed.

Prices are at present high in Iran, as for example hotel charges, rising from £3 to £6 for bed and breakfast.

Tehran can be reached by jet aircraft in 9 hours from London at fares ranging from £268 4s. od. (1st Class) to £185 4s. od. (Tourist) return. There are air services from the capital to Meshed (3 hours), and a train service daily (27 hours). There are weekly air services four times a week (2½ hours) and a daily train service (24 hours) from Tehran to Tabriz. Weather permitting, it is possible to fly four times a week to Hamadan and Kirmanshah, and there is a daily air service to Isfahan (1 hour) and bus services; also a weekly air service from Tehran to Yazd, and a service three times a week to Kirman. There is a daily air service from Tehran to Shiraz, and rail and air services between the capital and Khurramshahr and Ahwaz, by which Abadan is also served. Broadly speaking, with the exception of the rail services, other means of transporting passengers and goods are all subject to weather conditions.[1]

[1] I am indebted to Roger Stevens: *The Land of the Great Sophy*, London, 1962, pp. 269–271, for verification of these travel details as offered in his valuable Appendix.

Chapter 1

The Land

IRANIANS call their land Īrān, but their beautiful language, *Fārsī*, Persian. In this they preserve the memory of the ancient royal province of the Achaemenids; the southern province which is today called Fārs. The clash between the Achaemenids and the Greeks was one of the greatest in history. In 549 B.C. the Achaemenids began to form an empire which for a time included Egypt and extended in the west as far as Libya, while in the east it reached the Hindu Kush and Sind. It was the Greeks who stopped the Persian progress into Europe. They called their adversaries after the province whence the Achaemenids had sprung, which is why in Europe Iran is often known as Persia and its people are called the Persians, names also occurring in the Authorised Version of the Bible.

Since 1957 the Imperial Government of Iran, *Daulat-i-Shāhanshāhī-ye-Īrān*, has restored permission, withdrawn in Reza Shah's reign, for foreigners to use the name Persia. Nowadays, however, it has an old-fashioned ring. The modern tendency abroad is not to use it and yet the word 'Persia' carries special cultural associations for the European which cannot lightly be ignored. In this book it will be used wherever it seems appropriate.

Modern Iran with an area of 628,000 square miles is more than five times the size of Great Britain. This is far less than the total area of ancient Iran, which extended from Armenia and the Caucasus in the northwest as far as the borders of Sind in the southeast; from the Tigris-Euphrates basin in the southwest as far as the River Jaxartes (Syr Darya) in Central Asia, and from the eastern limits of Asia Minor in the west as far as the Hindu Kush in the east. Thus the region which may be considered Iranian falls between the Asiatic and the Mediterranean regions and between Arabia and the Caspian Sea, while looked at another way it also lies between India and the Black Sea. This medial position influences modern Iran both geologically and climatically: continental rock formations reach a geological frontier in Iran and seas to the west, steppes to the north, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Desert in the south and

southeast combine to shape its climate. Another resulting factor is a variety of political and cultural reciprocity which has affected the character of the Iranian people.

The inhabitants of Iran have in the past pushed their political power and cultural influence deep into adjoining regions. Conversely the Iranians have suffered invasion from those regions, being subjected to the ordeal of barbarian inroads and often having to face the challenge of adjustment to other peoples' way of life. This, in addition to the exigencies of their own harsh terrain and a climate sparing in bounties, has served to toughen the inhabitants of Iran and make them astute in dealing with others.

The present frontiers date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Treaties with Russia early in the nineteenth century fixed the northern frontier between Iranian Azerbaijan and what is now Soviet Azerbaijan. At the end of the same century Russia pacified the Trans-Caspian region to establish Iran's long border east of the Caspian. From 1870 to 1905 the British worked to establish Iran's frontier with Afghanistan and Baluchistan. In 1912 a mixed boundary commission of Persian, Turkish, British and Russian teams resumed former efforts to map the Turco-Persian border, bringing them to a successful conclusion in October 1914, when the British and Russian officers had to hasten from Turkey because of the War.

Iran's land frontiers being so long, the clarity and stability conferred on them by these operations are remarkable. Only three major issues seem today not yet quite resolved. The question of the frontier with Iraq on the waters of the Tigris-Euphrates estuary, the Shatt al-Arab, is one. The problem of the Helmand or Hirmand River, which flows out of the Afghan highlands into the Iranian province of Sistan, is another. Both these issues have obvious economic overtones, and so indeed does the third matter, Iran's claims to the island of Bahrein, in modern times an important oil producer. The Bahrein issue, however, shares with the Iraq frontier dispute the suspicion of being susceptible to use as a political ploy, as will be seen later. Relations between Iran and the modern state of Iraq, the successor to provinces of the Ottoman Turkish Empire in Mesopotamia, sometimes become strained because the Boundary Commission of 1912–1914 did not take the *talweg* or mid-stream line on the Shatt-al-Arab as the border, but the low-water line on the Persian side of the river. This left the navigation channel leading to the Iranian port of Khurramshahr under Iraqi jurisdiction.

Tension over the Helmand has only arisen since the Afghans began dam construction upstream and the supply of water for irri-

gation on the Iranian section of the river was threatened. No political maoeuvring is involved in this; it is a matter of life and death to the cultivators in the Iranian province of Sistan. However, Iranian and Afghan relations have in recent years improved greatly and the patient and calm negotiations of the past several years point to the possibility of, for Near Eastern politics, an exemplary rationalisation being achieved.

For our purposes in this book the most significant effect of Iran's geographical position is a political one and lies in Anglo-Russian rivalry in Asia during the nineteenth century, which has done much to shape modern Iranian political attitudes, while Iran's geographical proximity to Russia has in the twentieth century also had the effect of attracting a gradually increasing degree of attention from the United States. In addition to this, another result of Iran's position between Continents and spheres of Great Power activities has been involvement in two world wars. Belligerent nations have found themselves compelled to interfere in Iran's internal affairs: the challenge of their country's geographical position has therefore continued down to modern times to present itself, often to their detriment, to the Iranian people.

Apart from political frontiers, geographical features serve to define the modern state of Iran. In the east the Hindu Kush could once be regarded as the easternmost boundary. Although its spurs no longer reach as far as Iranian territory, the hills and valleys, and in particular the aridity of the country between present-day Iran and Afghanistan, still provide a sufficiently daunting frontier region. In the south, starting from the Gulf of Oman and where the frontier marches with Pakistan, the country consists of strangely convoluted mountains and ravines in a landscape that may be described as lunar in its weird austerity, in the districts of Makran on the coast, and the Sarhad inland. The two craters of the Kuh-i-Basman (11,000 feet) and the still active Kuh-i-Taftan (13,262 feet) are here the chief landmarks. A little to the north of Taftan lies the Helmand delta region where the frontier makes an enclave to the east so that most of the swampy delta falls within Iran.

Beyond this delta, which is called the Hamun, the frontier passes through dry and inhospitable lands until it reaches the Hari Rud or Herat River far to the north. Finally at Sarakhs it turns sharply westwards to become the border between Iranian Khurasan and Soviet Turkistan, continuing as far as the eastern shore of the Caspian at the mouth of the River Atrek.

The contrast in land features on the Iranian side of this frontier and on the Russian is one of the most marked distinctions between

Iran and neighbouring territory: the high mountain rim of the Persian Plateau dramatically overlooks the flat expanse of Turkistan. Going further west, where the Plateau's rim is formed by the lofty Alburz uplands, the contrast is between steep slopes and the Caspian sea-level. West of the Alburz the River Aras (Araxes) is the natural boundary between Iran and the Soviet Union. South of it rise the mountains of Iranian Azerbaijan.

These mountains are easterly outrunners of the Zagros chain which, entering from Asia Minor, follows a northwest–southeast axis through the centre of Iran. The southern face of this chain makes the southern sharp descent from the Persian Plateau and in the north overlooks the low-lying Tigris-Euphrates basin.

The Plateau elevates western and central Iran in a triangle formed by the Alburz in the north, the Zagros in the south. The height of the Plateau averages between four and six thousand feet. But the Plateau is ridged in a northwesterly–southeasterly direction with heights less than the northern and southern ranges, to give the western region those 'fertile valleys and high plains between the mountain ranges, to sustain a vigorous and healthy race' of which Herodotus was aware. In the southeast the Plateau descends to a depression. Inland drainage of rivers flowing inwards from the high edges of the Plateau makes this depression a salt desert, divided into two areas of, for all practicable purposes, impassable and unexploitable terrain. The divisions are called the Kavir and the Dasht-i-Lut, Desert of Lot. With the exception of the Rivers Karun and Kharkheh, which with a few other streams flow off the Zagros into the Persian Gulf, and the rivers and mountain torrents that find their way into the Caspian, drainage on the Plateau is entirely towards these salt deserts. The extremely dry atmosphere evaporates the sluggish-flowing waters as their impetus diminishes until finally the salt-encrusted wastes are reached and perpetuated. They give Iran what might be considered a dead heart and occupy nearly two-thirds of the total land mass, to influence profoundly population distribution and communications.

The dryness of the Plateau may be attributed to three factors. The Alburz and to a less degree the Azerbaijan uplands form a barrier against rain from the Black Sea area; the Caspian coastal strip receives an amplitude of rain denied the thirsty soil south of the Alburz. The Zagros ramparts obstruct the rain clouds that derive vapour from the Persian Gulf; the southern province of Khuzistan and the Gulf littoral get a precipitation denied regions north and east of the mountain chain. The Afghan Highlands, the deserts of Baluchistan and distance preclude Iran from the benefits of the

Monsoon which, where it peters out, moistens the southern valleys of the Hindu Kush.

Apart from the Caspian and Gulf coasts, Azerbaijan also (in the northwest) receives just enough rain for artificial irrigation not to be necessary. The Persian Gulf region gets its rainfall from December to January, but this is scanty compared with the amount enjoyed by the narrow strip and northern slopes of the Alburz mountains south of the Caspian. Here rainfall is spread out over the whole year. This area is moreover at a much lower altitude than most of Iran and is accordingly climatically distinct from the rest of the country. It is the area of the Hyrcanean Forests, with large trees and lush undergrowth.

On the Plateau there is wide variance between summer and winter temperatures. These temperature extremes are intensified by frequent high winds, especially in the southeast. Besides being generally poor, rainfall on the Plateau can, because of the presence of high ridges and the building-up of strong eddies of air over hot, corrugated land surfaces, be extremely capricious and to the hazards in the life of the Iranian villager is added the danger of sudden downpours. A thunder-storm in the hills can cause a quickly transient spate of water (a *seyl*), rushing off the naked hillside onto the parched plain below. In times of drought water may be found by digging in old torrent-beds, so that villages are often established near, even in, these beds, with the result that the onset of a fresh torrent destroys them.

A village can be rebuilt elsewhere after such a disaster, its inhabitants' frugal belongings – their boxes of valuables and their rugs and quilts – retrieved. Far worse is the damage these ironically dangerous torrents, in places where water is so badly needed, can do to an irrigation system peculiar to Iran, the system whereby water, tapped in alluvial fans at the foot of hills, is conducted to a cultivable spot by underground channels called *qanāts*. The water is thus shaded from the evaporating heat over the surface until it reaches a portion of the plain where communications and the nature of the soil are suitable for a settlement. There the *qanāt* issues to water a village's guardedly operated intricacy of irrigation channels. Every so many yards along its length shafts open into the *qanāt* for the removal of excavated material, for drawing water and for the entrance of *qanāt* diggers. Repair is necessary after a torrent has flooded the tunnel, bursting the sides and obliterating the shafts. It is then that villages lament and village *muqannis*, *qanāt*-diggers, go out with their leather buckets and wooden windlasses to begin the laborious task of cleaning out the mud and strengthening the *qanāt* walls. From an

aeroplane the tops of the shafts can be seen strung across the ground and indicating where the lines of *qanāts* converge on settlements which vary from the smallest villages to cities.

Where they converge on a deserted site the signs are of either water failure or lack of funds; often the latter, for *qanāt* construction and maintenance are costly. The power of the wealthy has not infrequently resided more in the capacity to finance irrigation than in mere ownership of land. The precariousness of this type of irrigation, as of any artificial irrigation, also demands the highest degree of security. In attempting to understand the character of Iranians it is necessary to try to imagine the despondency of a people when the system their cultivation entirely depends on is devastated and, whether by war or torrent, hopes of livelihood are dashed. What generations have perfected can be ruined in a few hours or minutes, a vicissitude to which, by the agency of man and of nature, Iranians have many times been exposed.

Taken together, Iranian geographical and climatic conditions produce a fine balance between subsistence and the lack of it. This raises an important feature of the country's human geography: the existence within its borders of both settled agriculturalists and, albeit today a small minority, wandering pastoralists. Where cultivation is possible throughout the year, the normal cycle of agrarianism can exist. Where water is in reasonable and lasting supply, gardens and orchards are found and cities have been built. In those regions where only grazing is feasible, and that only by movement from one quickly exhausted pasture to another, pastoralism prevails.

In Iran nomadism, with the usual concomitant of tribal organisation, is on a somewhat modified scale; modern conditions are progressively modifying it further. Iran does not contain either the great yet traversible deserts of Arabia or the wide plains of Central Asia for the existence of absolute tribal nomadism and tribesmen who in the past invaded Iran from those regions had sooner or later to adjust themselves to new conditions. These conditions included the possibility of the herding tribes sowing at points along their migration routes. They thus became in some degree sowers of corn as well as grazers of flocks. They were in an area which, as its earliest ascertainable religious testimonies prove, believed in its agrarian possibilities and its destiny as the habitat of farmers, not of roving tribes. Yet nomads continued to be nomads in Iran because, although it receives sufficient rain for snow to lie in the hottest seasons on the high mountains and for there to be water available underground, conditions could not everywhere support agrarianism. Hence in Iran two nations arose, the settled and the nomadic, with

many resultant tensions. Also, Iran was pleasant enough by comparison with the Steppe and the Desert to attract invasions of the Arabs from the southwest and the Turks and Mongols from Central Asia.

The latter do not seem to have sought the settled life Iran could in some degree offer so much as better grazing grounds and a closer proximity to cities, always attractive to the nomad. From cities issue the caravans for the nomad to exact protection money from or, alternatively, plunder. From the cities also come purchasers for his wool and fats, rugs and hides, in exchange for tools, luxuries and toys. The barbarian invaders from Central Asia came in greater numbers than those from the Arabian desert and took longer to be assimilated. They came as soldiers and retained militant habits. They gave Iran dynasties and these certainly imitated more settled and urbane Iranian predecessors and were tutored by Iranian ministers in the ways of ruling a cultivating rather than tribal population; but nevertheless attitudes bred in the Steppe died hard.

The great Arab invasion of the seventh century A.D. was a different matter, largely because it was inspired by the faith of Islam. Though this religion's banners were carried to other lands by men of the desert, its origin and its leaders were urban. It began in the trading cities of Mecca and Medina and the Muslim leaders thought in terms of the city, with its mosque, barracks, merchants' quarters and schools. Some Arab tribes settled in parts of Iran as tribes and plenty of strife did they occasion; but the Arab invasion was signalised, not by the destruction of great cities but their creation, while urbanisation gained greater momentum from the Arabs' reluctance to take up agriculture; the agricultural arrangements of earlier times were left to continue as before and provide revenue.

Islam, then, strengthened the urban aspect of life in Iran while, oddly enough, later invasions of recently converted Turks served, despite their lack of urbanity, to strengthen the religious faith which had begun to grow relaxed in cities. But as the poor relations of Turkish dynasts tended to remain tribesmen, a disruptive element has for long been present in Iranian society. In modern times efforts have been made to rid the country of tribes and their often treacherous ways. Yet the tribal element has a function in relation to the country's economy which zealous attempts to extirpate or browbeat the men of the open spaces into submission might at times have disregarded.

The wandering shepherd is the nation's grazier. From his flocks comes the wool which, to cite one example of its profitable use, is woven into those rugs and carpets that have made Persia famous all

over the world. Iranian conditions force the grazier to move in search of pasture and the traditionally evolved social organisation for this is the tribe: tribes formed to seek pasture need movement and space for survival. Overhasty settlement has had the effect of reducing cattle stocks and decimating a virile section of the population; the tribes die of disease once they are compelled to live on their own dung-heaps instead of marching away in quest of new grassland. Settlement of the tribes requires more planning and thought than were at first given to it.

The mountains, whose valleys are often the domain of tribesmen, consist mainly of limestone with volcanic deposits. The limestone makes for scenery of a bleak grandeur; but more important is the fact that the limestone domes contain oil. If Iran had none of its cultural importance, its importance as an oil producer would still give it unusual significance.

The oil that has so far principally been exploited is in the southwest, in the Zagros foothills, under large oval limestone domes covered by red and grey shales, anhydrite, gypsum and salt.

Sufficient has been said about factors such as the salt desert, the coastal strip along the Caspian and the importance of highlands as natural water reservoirs, to form some idea already about distribution of population. The most densely populated region is the area of heaviest rainfall: the Caspian shore, where an average of more than a hundred persons to the square mile is reported. South of the Alburz and in the more arid parts a density of less than thirteen to the square mile is common and here settlement cannot be said to be continuous but, rather, spread out in oases. The basic unit is the village rising to the small town or cluster of hamlets, containing from three to ten thousand people.[1] This unit is the centre of farming activity which is generally speaking never based on separate and widely scattered farmsteads, made impossible by the necessity of concentration of water supplies and security requirements.

The larger cities fall mainly round the western, northern and southern edges of the great desert, the acrid odour of whose sands reaches almost as far as Tehran's southeasterly suburbs, while the dust of the Kavir whitens passengers on the train from Tehran eastwards to Khurasan. This line passes near the cities stretched along

[1] For interesting descriptions of village economy and population figures see F. A. C. Forbes-Leith, *Checkmate*, London, 1928, and Frank Grove, *Journal of Central Asian Society*, Vol. IX, 1922. Their remarks chiefly refer to Western Iran. A valuable account of Iranian geography is to be found in W. B. Fisher, *The Middle East*, London, 1961.

the desert's northern confines, Semnan, Damghan, Shahrud, Nishapur to Meshed, with the city of Sabzevar lying some way to the south of the line. South from Tehran routes connect it with cities which stand in relation to the desert rather as ports round an inland sea: Qum, Kashan, Na'in, Yazd down to Kirman in the southeast and commanding the way to Pakistan. Isfahan is also south of Tehran and Qum, shielded by a ridge of uplands from the desert and taking advantage of the valley of the Zayandeh Rud, a river flowing inland from the Zagros. Shiraz also is at a remove from the desert and sited in a place with natural advantages in the southern reaches of the Zagros ranges. Tabriz is the northwesternmost city of importance, an importance derived from the surrounding fertile province of Azerbaijan and proximity to Iran's northwestern border. Rasht is the capital of the province of Gilan and looks towards the Caspian Sea. Ahwaz is the capital of the province of Khuzistan and is orientated towards the Persian Gulf and connected by river, the Karun, and rail with the Shatt-al-Arab and the ports of Khurramshahr and Abadan.

Thus an inner arc of cities straddles routes round the dead desert centre while others on the outside look outwards and can be related to entrance and exit points. In Meshed there is apparent in the atmosphere and the appearance of the people thronging the bazaars a sense of Central Asia away to the northeast; while also from Meshed the road continues to Herat in Afghanistan whence it has access to Pakistan and the Indian sub-continent. Tabriz has links with the Caucasus, with the Black Sea, and more especially with Turkey: with Istanboul and the West. This has influenced its history and commerce as well as the character of its people. In the southeast Yazd and Kirman are both related to the port of Bandar Abbas, so named by Shah Abbas after he had driven out the Portuguese in 1622; formerly it was the trading post on the Persian Gulf famous among European merchants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as Gombroon. Shiraz is connected by road, over steep passes, with the port of Bushire, which assumed some of Bandar Abbas's importance, as being closer to the metropolitan area of Western Iran, after the accession of Nadir Shah in 1736. Ahwaz looks to the waters at the head of the Persian Gulf, to the trading port of Khurramshahr and various oil-ports, while it is the capital of the chief oil-producing area. Rasht is served by the port of Bandar Pahlavi on the Caspian and stands amidst the rice swamps and not far from the tea-gardens of Lahijan. Hamadan and Kirmanshah share an orientation towards Baghdad and stand on the route that once carried goods from China to the Mediterranean; with Tehran and

Qazvin they belong to the well-populated western region, over which it was once not difficult for Isfahan in its central position to cast the spell of a royal and resplendent sway.

Hamadan is at the junction of the route from Tehran through Qazvin and on to Kirmanshah, and another route passing through Malayir and Burujird to enter the Zagros through steep defiles and wend its way south to the Khuzistan plain and Persian Gulf. It is along this lengthy and severe road that lorries travel from Khurramshahr to reach the warehouses of Tehran, which has become the main distributing centre of the country.

Until recently the best way, using modern means of transport, to reach Shiraz from the port of Khurramshahr was to go north through Khurramabad as far as Malayir, thence to Isfahan and then south to Shiraz. This detour is now no longer necessary since an improved road has been built directly from Shiraz to Ahwaz, south of the Zagros barrier. Similarly, unless rough and hazardous ways through rocky ridges and across a depression of salt desert were followed, Yazd could only be reached from Shiraz by a detour through Isfahan, doubling the distance. Modern roads are, however, being planned to obviate these circuitous routes.

When Reza Shah came to power in 1925 only a few miles of small-gauge railway existed: for all intents and purposes Iran had no railways. The extension of the Russian system from Julfa on the Azerbaijan border to Tabriz in 1916, with a branch to Lake Urumia (nowadays called Lake Reza'iyeh), and that of the Indian system a few miles over the Baluchistan border in the southeast, also dating from the First World War, could hardly be counted. Nor could the narrow-gauge line from Tehran to Shah 'Abdul 'Azim, a suburb a few miles away.

Reza Shah wanted to extend and consolidate the power of the Central Government. It was also desirable to gain a market in the more arid regions of the south for products from the north. In dealing with tribal hostility, he improved roads, notably the road from Hamadan through Khurramabad to the south: this road opened up the fastnesses of the Lur tribes, who had made a stand against the Government and its policy of disarming tribesmen. But Reza Shah's greatest single achievement was the Trans-Iranian railway.

The British, Russians, French and Belgians had discussed railways for Iran over a number of years. Interesting notions of the best locations for railways had been canvassed, but Reza Shah appears to have been determined to avoid as far as possible following any route proposed by foreigners. His northern terminus was not the established Caspian port serving Rasht and Tehran, Bandar Pahlavi

(Enzeli), but a new one at the other end of the Caspian littoral, called Bandar Shah, from which constructing a line over the Alburz's eastern spurs to Tehran entailed an astounding feat of engineering. His southern terminus might have been Khurramshahr, also an established port; but Khurramshahr was very near Basra in Iraq: a link with the railway in British-influenced Iraq would have been too easy. The Shah, therefore, diverted the line from Ahwaz to a new port on a large sea inlet from the Persian Gulf called the Khor Musa, which also had the great advantage of being free from Iraqi control of its navigation channel, the blight on Khurramshahr. The new southern port was named Bandar Shahpur. Ahwaz and Khurramshahr were linked by rail during the Second World War to facilitate sending supplies to Russia.

Reza Shah had the Trans-Iranian railway under construction by 1927. Before his reign ended, this line had been operating some years and was already a well-found means for forwarding supplies to Russia when the Allies entered Iran in 1941. Unfortunately, however, the branch lines planned to connect Tehran, the capital, with Tabriz, Meshed and Yazd were not completed. Since 1954, the Meshed and Tabriz lines have been finished and now, in 1965, the continuation of the line to Yazd and the southeast is again under way. In connection with Iran's membership of the Central Treaty Organisation there is talk of a railway link with Turkey on one side and Pakistan on the other.

Reza Shah also desired to inaugurate air services. Messrs. Junkers of Germany gained a concession to run passenger and mail services between Iran, Europe and Asia in February 1926. The concession allowed for the training of Iranian pilots and the opening of repair and assembly shops and by 1937 Iran could take the initiative in introducing an air service between Tehran and Baghdad. Today the country is well served by air communications. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's management saw the advantages of air transport in a country like Iran in very early years and used their own chartered services, while Reza Shah's and subsequent governments have promoted air services both as a state enterprise and through private finance.

Nevertheless size and geography make Iran's communication and transport problems far from easy and in recent history they have been made more cumbrous by increased centralisation on the capital. The present Shah's proclamation on reform, which was issued in the autumn of 1961, contained the suggestion that provincial authorities were henceforth gradually to assume more local responsibility than had been the rule. However, Iran is not easy to govern and the

central power must always consider numerous factors leading to disunity. The large realm contains three distinct elements of population, the urban, cultivating and pastoral; its people are also of varied origins. Each city has its own traditions, manifested in peculiarities of speech and idiom as well as in such details as types of food and varieties of craft. A man's outlook is moulded by the city of which he is a citizen or the part of the country whence he comes. A Turk is still recognised as such by a non-Turk and a man of Turkish origin has been heard to refer to his fellow Iranians as 'these *Fārsīhā*' – 'these Persians'. Nowadays, the dissemination of radio broadcasts, the speeding up of movement between outlying areas and the capital, and the uniformity of a state-controlled educational system combine to diminish differences and local patriotisms, but enough remain for comment on local differences still to be valid.

The time has scarcely come when the central authority can to any appreciable and revitalising extent delegate much authority to local bodies. The rigorous centralisation on Tehran instituted by Reza Shah, to bring the country back under a single and strong rule, was continued after the war between 1951 and 1953, during the short but momentous period of extreme nationalism under Dr. Musaddiq. Reza Shah had to combat foreign influences which in the eyes of many Iranians threatened the integrity of the country; and local notables and provincial governors had to feel the force of his dictatorship. Tehran became the hub of his modernising movement. This was Reza Shah's 'New Order', whose impulses and directives radiated from a capital to which new opportunities attracted people; especially from a deteriorating agrarian scene whose improvement was neglected. With tight control of people's movements and of the import, export and purveyance of commodities, Reza Shah's era was also one in which permits and licences had to be obtained to an increasing extent, and as Tehran was the only centre where they could be obtained provincial cities' direct relations with the outside world were systematically curtailed.

Under Dr. Musaddiq the country was in the grip of a xenophobic, nationalist movement which was mainly the product of an excited capital; the capital's control over the whole country had, it was felt, to be strengthened. As in the case of Reza Shah's movement, Dr. Musaddiq's followed by only a few years a world war when foreign influences had considerably permeated Iranian affairs. Thus by 1951 once again there was proliferation of controls operated from the capital: the attitude was formed which was evinced by the policeman who told a traveller he could only view the ruins of Persepolis by moonlight if he had a card from the Prime Minister. The tempo

of events, in addition to the controls, made prominent merchants and notables, who had in times past formed the mainstays of provincial communities, dwell in the capital. Also since 1950 Tehran has become the headquarters of the nation's chief planning authority, the Plan Organisation; by 1956 provincial municipalities were complaining of loss of initiative in even such matters as street repairing.

Tehran, therefore, between 1925 and 1960 became the bottleneck through which goods were routed before distribution in the country, and to which all had to resort to transact business. This tendency is reflected in the lack of foreign Consuls at provincial centres. Once there were British Consuls in Kirman, Kirmanshah, Hamadan, Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz, and, at times, Rasht and Qazvin, with Consuls General at Meshed and Ahwaz, and the British Resident, Persian Gulf, at Bushire. Nowadays foreign Consuls are in the provinces only at Khurramshahr – British, U.S.A., Iraqi, Pakistani, Indian; Meshed – U.S.A. and Afghan; and Tabriz, where there is a United States representative, as there is in Isfahan. Foreign firms, particularly carpet dealers and the pharmaceutical manufacturers who purchased opium, had their own agents in Isfahan, Hamadan and Kirman in the 1920s, but in proportion to the growth of Tehran's all-pervading influence, the provincial capitals have suffered a decline.

Here this question is mentioned chiefly in relation to communications, the difficulties of goods being routed through the capital and the capital's sapping of provincial initiative. Behind lie political factors which sometimes run counter to geography and fundamental local needs. In order to explain why Tehran has assumed such importance and how this is due to attempts to give the nation unity and uniformity, underlying political impulses must be examined and it is with recent political history that this book will now chiefly be concerned.

Chapter 2

New Relationships

THE history of society and civilisation in the area comprising present-day Iran is of great antiquity. An uninterrupted chronology based on the records of culture and political activity could be started from as far back as the fourth millennium B.C. while in recent years there has been talk of celebrating two thousand five hundred years of uninterrupted monarchy. These plans are presumably based on the fact that Cyrus began founding the Achaemenid dynasty in 550 B.C., Darius consolidating it some thirty years later. In this book, however, the subject is modern Iran. Modern Iran might at times derive inspiration, or solace, from visions of past greatness, but nonetheless in some important respects it is emerging in spite of rather than because of ancient myths and traditions. It is therefore fitting, so far as such an obtrusive past can be precluded, to treat its history as a new departure. Versions of the ancient past have in modern times been conjured up to support the claims of modern Iranian nationalism and obviously the past has helped to mould the people. Therefore where necessary, without attempting to summarise over two thousand years of history, allusions to the past will be made, especially as civilisation in Iran has to a remarkable degree unfailingly betrayed signs of a basic continuity in attitudes and ideals; although it must be remembered that this is a matter of abstractions, assumed as a refuge by the people, or perverted by individuals in the pursuit of power, as a recurring pattern of historical exigencies has enhanced their appeal. Nevertheless a distinctive Iranian civilisation has persisted from the Oxus to the Tigris-Euphrates Valley and from the Caucasus to Northwest India, and from this two things may be understood: first, the resilience of those who have become heirs of the Iranian legend, and second, the tenacious loyalty this legend has evoked.

This loyalty must be related to the vicissitudes and the fluctuations of Iranian dominion and to Iran's geographical position in a gap between forces in the West and the Far East, at a cross-roads on trade routes once of great international importance. With the threat and actuality of invasion constant and forfeiture of power to alien

conquerors recurrent, loyalty to the idea of what it is to be Iranian – rather than, for example, Arab, Turk or Mongol – was the more vital when often enough, and down to very recent times, little else besides this abstract concept remained for separate identity to survive. Not even ancient Iranian religion survived except at the level of folk practices, and at this level, also, pristine aspirations and practices acquired an ever-thickening patina of foreign superstitions, imported notably by conquerors from Central Asia, or were altered to fit into a new religious framework. After the seventh century A.D. the official religion was Islam, imported by the Arabs. To this religion the people of Iran, while either strengthening earlier modifications in it or adding newer ones, ultimately succumbed.

Yet in spite of all this it remains true that somehow the Iranians always conquered and absorbed their conquerors. Religion and territory might be lost or alienated, but the cohesive force of the Iranian legend remained: the abstract ideal of what it is to be Iranian persisted. This force's outward manifestation took the form of language, literature and retention in a new guise of old customs and festivals. It is partly in this connection that the language and literature have acquired a significance which may at first sight seem disproportionate to the general achievement or intrinsic importance of the Iranian people; and yet in their capacity to overcome disaster and maintain strong cultural distinction, manifested in arts that appeal to men far beyond the Iranian world, the people of Iran evince what a continued response to an abstract ideal can achieve. They prove how such a response, coupled with the ingenuity which the very nature of their land demands of its inhabitants, can triumph through repeated ordeals.

On deeper study and in the light of this Iranian survival, the Iranian temperament's peculiar characteristics, although they sometimes seem adverse to success in immediate issues, in wider contexts furnish a sense of wonder, if not of inspiration, to mankind. Certainly there is no denying the inspiration which can be derived from Persian poetry, and the joy and sense of achievement in design gained by such evidences of the continuing Persian genius as the Persian carpet, ceramics and the miniature. But the sense of wonder and the fascination that Iran is capable of exercising undergo amplification and become a part of the comprehension of the human capacity for endurance, the moment the study of the arts of Persia is combined with close attention to its stormy history.

For the purposes of this book the first important date is 1813, the year in which the first of two humiliating treaties with Russia was concluded, the Treaty of Gulistan, followed by a second and more

drastic treaty, the Treaty of Turkomanchai, in 1828. These treaties mark Iran's first major confrontation with a militarily better-organised state embarking on a career of expansion. The Russian superiority was in fact military rather than to any appreciable degree technological, for at this stage in its history Russia was not really technologically much in advance of Iran. The Russian army, however, and Russian diplomacy were in a triumphant mood; they had subjugated not long before large areas of the Caucasus. It is to this mood, instead of to the tempting comparison between Russian activity contrasted with Persian torpor, that the former's success should be ascribed. Iran was by no means inert, but only some thirty years earlier had its rulers succeeded in achieving a measure of control over the whole country and sufficient internal settlement had not yet been accomplished for external success to be feasible. Campaigns against Russia, though they ended in disaster, were undertaken by Iran because of an alert awareness of approaching danger and the necessity of taking the offensive first; but, as the event showed, too late and too inefficiently. These defeats by Russia opened a phase of history which was particularly to affect the northern part of the country but which, once Great Britain became involved, also led to international pressures that have overshadowed the whole nation until today. Although it was not until 1813 that the sharp realities of a western type of army were introduced to Iran by Russia, the Persian Court had been given the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the blandishments of western diplomacy since 1800, when British and French diplomacy in Tehran began.

Iran was becoming involved in new relationships. Commercial and to some extent cultural contacts had existed with Europe during the time of the Safavid Shahs, who had ruled an Iranian empire they began forming in 1502 and lost in 1722. Had it been part of the design of this study to take the beginnings of modern Iran back further than the start of relations between Iran and Britain, Russia and France in the nineteenth century, there would have been a case for seeing how far the origins of modern Iranian nationhood were traceable to the Safavid epoch. For this, discussion of Ottoman Turkish power's effect on Iran from the west, and the rise of the Afghans in the east, would have been necessary. But the web of relations would have been almost entirely oriental with no involvement in any kind of western vortex. Safavid contacts with Europe were limited. Admittedly there were, as early as 1507, Portuguese, under d'Albuquerque, in the Persian Gulf. Shah 'Abbas I and the British, acting jointly, drove them out of their emporium on the Island of Hormuz in 1622. There was the visit of Anthony Jenkinson from the Muscovy

Company in 1559, repeated in 1561; and of the brothers Sir Anthony and Sir Robert Sherley in 1598, with, in this instance, consequent improvements in the Persian army and unavailing attempts at wider diplomatic contacts in Europe. There were other efforts to circumvent the Ottoman Empire by opening trade routes through Russia; efforts which were abandoned in 1581 after twenty years of failure. A less dubious English mission than that of the Sherleys' (for the Sherleys had gone to Persia as private adventurers) was that of Sir Dodmore Cotton in 1627. Thirty-seven years later the French sent a trade mission, in the time of 'Abbas II, and in 1637 there had been the Duke of Holstein's trade mission, of which the travel narrative of Adam Olearius[1] is the memorial. Peter the Great, from whom modern Iran's difficulties with Russia are often dated, sent embassies in 1708 and 1715. The to-ing and fro-ing was quite extensive, the former a good deal more than the latter. But these episodic contacts, although they gave rise to some remarkable travel literature by European observers of the Safavid scene, cannot be considered to have fundamentally altered the course of Iranian history.

These earlier contacts, therefore, are left so that certain aspects of dynastic history may be traced which are preliminary to the dynastic and political situation in 1800. The Safavid state collapsed after Mahmud of Qandahar, Mahmud the Afghan, had won the battle of Gulnabad in March 1722 and seized the Safavid capital, Isfahan. Afghan rule was short-lived. It did not last beyond 1729 and the death of Mahmud's successor, Ashraf. Anarchy and ruin prevailed. European factories packed up and any kind of mutually fructifying relations with the outside world were temporarily out of the question. There was an attempt, partly successful, at re-establishing dynastic strength: under Nadir Shah between 1736 and 1747 a strong central government did exist, but it was not of the kind to which the people could look for clemency and protection. 1736 was the year when this soldier assumed the diadem he had initially retrieved from the Afghans for a Safavid pretender. His power was cruel and achieved no permanent settlement but left the seeds of discord and fanaticism. Nadir impressed European observers, for he was a mighty conqueror. He softened the power of the Moghuls in India by his defeat and humiliation of them, actions which benefited British expansion in the sub-continent rather than alleviating the lot of the Persian masses in Iran. None the less Nadir's Indian victories brought to Iran celebrated jewels, the loot which became an obsession with this Khurasanian bandit turned Shah, eventually to be murdered by his own

[1] A. Olearius, *Vermehrte Newe Beschreibung der Muscowitischen und Persischen Reise*, Schlesswig, 1656.

guards. He did attempt to ensure some sort of security for foreign merchants; also he imposed a temporary peace in the south and on the waters of the Persian Gulf. But he failed to effect real stabilization of the whole country and his principal monument is the booty from India, still a factor in Iranian finances, glittering in the vaults of the National Bank.

The dynastic attempt of Nadir the Afsharid – he belonged to the Afshar tribe – was not emulated until the experiment of the Qajar family, which began in the last decade of the eighteenth century. From 1750 to 1790 southern and central Iran had been ruled by the Zands from their base at Shiraz, the capital of the province of Fars. The first Zand ruler, Karim Khan, was a tough and, from all accounts, amiable person of tribal origin from the mountainous district of Luristan, in the vicinity of Khurramabad in Western Iran. His amiability may, however, be called in question: a not negligible number of Iranians would question the possibility of any Lur chief having genuine goodness of disposition; or, indeed, of any ruler having it. Nevertheless Sir John Malcolm describes Karim Khan's reign as a moment of delicious respite in a troubled history and says that his moderation was, by Iranian standards of those times, 'as singular as his humanity and justice'.[1] There is less doubt about his shrewdness; and none at all about his being, like certain other notable Muslim rulers and conquerors, illiterate.

Before discussing the sources of Karim Khan's power and their significance in relation to later developments, a return to the Safavid epoch will be useful to introduce some explanation of another power in the land, the religious. As already briefly indicated by references to the number of foreign visitors, under the Safavids Iran attained a degree of prosperity. Carpet-weaving and architecture in particular reached the acme of achievement, and there was, especially under Shah Tahmasp (1524–1576), Shah 'Abbas the Great (1587–1629), Shah Safi (1629–1642) and Shah 'Abbas II (1642–1667), considerable royal concern for economic improvement. Isfahan became one of the world's greatest cities, foreign travellers, depending upon where they came from, comparing it with London, Paris or Naples. But in the final reckoning it may have seemed that, after all, the Iranian people had only been treated to a spectacle of pomp which had degenerated into effeteness leading to ruinous defeat; no lasting basis of prosperity remaining, but only fanaticism, superstition and insecurity. Fanaticism was generated by the strong religious propaganda which, although for quite explicable reasons, was a feature of the Safavids' policy; superstition sprang from earlier

[1] Sir John Malcolm, *The History of Persia*, London, 1815, Vol. II, p. 115.

sowings which, however, the Safavids had done nothing to eradicate but for policy reasons done not a little to encourage.

The Safavid family had gained dynastic status with the military support of the tribes of the Azerbaijan region in Northwest Iran, whence they themselves originated in the city of Ardebil. They were descended from a line of religious shaikhs going back to Shaikh Safiu'd-Din – hence the dynastic name of Safavi or Safavid – who died in 1334. Establishing their descent further back, to the seventh Imam, or leader, of the Shi'ites, Musa, the family stood forth as the champions of the Shi'ite faction of Islam, and claimed descent ultimately from Husain, a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad.

The two main sects in Islam are the Sunnite and the Shi'ite. The first is in the majority and its name derives from the contention that its adherents are the Orthodox, following the *Sunna* or Tradition of the Prophet. *Shi'a*, on the other hand, means 'faction': the break-away group. When the Prophet Muhammad died in A.D. 632, no clear guidance was left about who should succeed him in his role of leader of the Muslim community he had founded. Accordingly, to the followers of his *Sunna*, whoever was venerable, brave, outstanding for service to the community and generally acceptable to it, morally and socially, could be elected – in adherence to a circumscribed but liberal, democratic principle. A person so elected would become the Imam, the community's leader, with a somewhat patriarchal function.

The opposing faction maintained the legitimist position: that the Prophet's mantle ought to pass to a man who had close family connections with the founding leader. This position also adumbrated the theory that a portion of the Prophet's spiritual authority could be passed by him to a chosen intimate; a theory which has never been entertained by the Sunnites, except in certain Sufi or 'mystical' associations, but which among the Shi'ites has been operated in varying degrees, postulating the existence of grace and the possibility of its transmission.

In the absence of a direct heir of the body the Shi'ite candidate for the Imamate was 'Ali. He was the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, the husband of his daughter, Fatima; also he was considered to have enjoyed special intimacy with the Prophet. Thus 'Ali's candidature for the Caliphate or deputyship on the Prophet's demise became the Shi'ite platform. In fact he did not succeed to the position of Caliph until three men chosen by the community had already held this office: Abu Bekr (632–634), 'Umar (634–644) and 'Uthman (644–656). 'Ali became Caliph in A.D. 656 and survived five years.

The Shi'a failed during 'Ali's tenure of the leadership of Islam to establish the legitimist position. His succession became the signal for a definite and strenuous alignment of forces. There was a civil war and 'Ali's side lost to the Umayyad family, which held the Caliphate, with their capital at Damascus, from the year A.D. 661 to 750. In that year a Shi'ite-sponsored uprising with a strong Iranian colouring, originating in the northeastern Iranian province of Khurasan, substituted the 'Abbasid family for the Umayyads as rulers of the Muslim community.

The 'Abbasids lasted until Hulagu the Mongol's sack of their capital at Baghdad in 1258. Although the 'Abbasids were descended from an uncle of the Prophet's, this relationship to the Prophet, albeit closer than that of the Umayyads, and the use made of Shi'ite emotions in their rise to power did not result in Shi'ite control of Islam. Instead the Shi'a movement remained a suppressed agitation and rallying point for disaffected elements in the extensive empire the Muslims had acquired, from the Atlantic seaboard to southeast Asia, from China's western confines to Aden and East Africa.

The Shi'ite movement's capacity for becoming the expression of political and social discontent was fortified by the special Islamic situation, in its turn influenced by Iranian tendencies, whereby religion and politics were not separated but inextricably combined under the banner of a religion which was both the supreme spiritual and secular authority. From the time of Dàrius' inscription on the rocks at Bisitun, engraved between 521 and 486 B.C., up to very recent times, God and charismatic factors have been invoked in Iran to bolster government over a large area with difficult communications and a heterogeneous population. Religious community and religious sanctioning of power were possible when other concepts of nationalism would have been difficult. Many factors militate against Iranian unity. Yet, as suggested at the beginning of this chapter, other factors exist – apart from geographical ones – which make for it. The result of these paradoxical circumstances is a balance sufficiently delicate for tension to be inevitable.

It was a moderate form of the Shi'ite position which attained what may be called 'regime status' under the Safavid Shahs; the 'Twelver' variety according to which the Imamate passed in succession to 'Ali's twelve heirs of the flesh, of whom the twelfth, called Mehdi (The Mahdi), if he ever existed at all, vanished in infancy. When the world is in the extremity of travail, he, it is believed, will return as liberator, saviour and judge. Thus the victory of Shi'ism in any form is really the victory of millennialism. As a result of Safavid efforts Shi'ism became the official religion of Iran, where the

majority of the Muslim element of the population still professes it: out of twenty-two million people in Iran, 21·7 million are Muslim and of these approximately eighty per cent are Shi'ite.

In keeping with the triumph of millennial aspirations entailed by the triumph of Shi'ism, and with the absence, in the early Islamic concept of society, of any division between the functions of Church and State, the Shi'ite clerics became extremely influential, even to the point of dominating the Shah when the latter was weak. With religion their chief instrument for gaining power, the Safavids encouraged the religious classes – whom, so long as their family produced strong rulers, they could manipulate as they wished. Very influential in their shaping of policy was the necessity of welding together a Shi'ite Persia capable of meeting the challenge of an expanding and powerful Sunnite Ottoman adversary, threatening Iran's western borders.

In Islam, because there was originally no such separation between Church and State as there is in Christianity (where it may ultimately be traced to the dictum about rendering to God what is His and unto Caesar, his), so there was never any Church in the Christian sense, and therefore no clergy. However, for convenience the words 'clergy', 'clerics' etc. will be used; but it should be borne in mind that the class of persons referred to bears little resemblance to the spiritual functionaries, even intermediaries between God and Man, of the Christian Church. In Islam the clerical class is, rather, a social category, whose functions are as much legal, and potentially political, as spiritual.

The leaders of the Shi'ite 'clergy' are called *mujtahids*. A mujtahid is a fully qualified theologian entitled by his knowledge of the Holy Law, obtained by memorisation of the sacred writ and of legal precedents, and by his moral qualities and social acumen, to receive through the consensus of his colleagues' opinion the supreme degree of *ijtihād*. This confers on him the right to interpret the Law and be regarded as the only authority capable of expressing the intentions of the concealed Mehdi. On the Coming of the Mehdi, all earthly authority would of course be superseded. Until this Coming, however, purely temporal authority is theoretically bound to consult and defer to the mujtahids, for purely temporal authority is only an expedient, suffered until the Hidden Imam's return.

The Safavids' skill and success lay in capturing the force of a suppressed religious aspiration. But the Safavids not only used religion as a basis for their despotism; they also enlisted the services of superstition. Their soothsayers were on government salaries and wielded considerable influence. From this beginning, once the Safavid

Shahs ceased to be strong and lost the initiative, the mujtahids and, to a slightly less extent, the astrologers, gained supremacy. Karim Khan the Zand ruler, his seat of government that most sceptical of cities, Shiraz, famous for its free-thinking poets, its mystics and its wine, cut through the strings of clericalism, whose prestige had already suffered from the calamity of the Afghan invasion. This invasion, besides being the triumph of a Sunnite power, had demonstrated the incompetence of clerical politics and strategy. Another blow had been Nadir Shah's brief dictatorship, a purely military and, incidentally, Sunnite government.

To legitimise their power the Safavids used spiritual authority. Although he deferred to the people's longing for the Appearance of the Hidden Imam and had coins minted in his name, Karim Khan's appeal rested on another component in the acquisition of power in Iranian society, a component perhaps ultimately more effective than the religious appeal because fundamentally more popular over a wider area of the community. Allusion has already been made to the failure of religion as a cohesive force in perpetuating Iran,[1] and anyway Islam was not originally a Persian, but an Arab, religion. Karim Khan's power rested on a shrewd exercise of the art of gaining a number of loyal followers by the display of what is called in Persian speech, *lūtīgarī*, by which is understood the virtues of courage and what may be called 'blood-brotherliness', rather in the Gipsy sense. *Lūtīgārī* is an altogether popular and Iranian concept. It prefigures the kind of association people make for their mutual benefit in a community frequently subject to the breakdown of central authority and of Law. Groups band together for protection and strength against hostile forces that would otherwise take advantage of a weakened and disintegrated society. The word *lūtī* means a clown; but it can also mean a manly and lovable clown, endued with strength to save society.

Karim Khan was hail-fellow and comradely. Theologians talked a language he did not comprehend. He afforded a distracted people protection, based on the fundamental need of having the opportunity to get enough to eat and live unmolested. In Persian history such leaders as Karim Khan had arisen before, in times when a law embedded in religious faith and theory had temporarily lost control. These leaders were local phenomena and can be related to the accompaniment of legal breakdown in collapse at the centre and loss of metropolitan leadership. These local leaders were familiar to the people and glamorous in their eyes. Kaveh, the legendary blacksmith, and the champion Rustam are enshrined in the national epic, the

[1] See page 15.

great *Shah Namah*, 'Book of Kings', by the poet Firdausi. Ya'qub ibn Lais of Sistan, the coppersmith who made an empire and ruled from A.D. 868 to 878, is still one of the most popular heroes of Iranian history. To some extent Karim Khan fits into this category, and in his time formal clericalism could make little headway. Its power was not, however, completely dissolved. This remained to be attacked, some one hundred and seventy years later, by another hero rather of the old *lūtī*-type, Reza Shah.

Karim Khan reintroduced yet another endemic feature of Iranian political power. His roots were tribal. Discussion of geographical factors has already indicated the 'two-nation' character of Iran, as between the nomad and the settled portions of the population; a character nowadays rapidly being changed but one which until not long ago posed problems too profound to be ignored. The Safavids were hierarchical and urban. For them the College-cum-Shrine and the Imperial Palace were part of one precinct. The economy and embellishment of cities were dominant features of their era. For them tribal manpower was a useful adjunct as long as sovereignty was being won. Once it was achieved, tribes were decimated or shifted from one end of the realm to the other to be made march-wardens and kept thoroughly subordinated to the central power.

Karim Khan acted the quasi-patriarchal role of tribal leader. He never styled himself 'Shah', but preferred the title, 'Regent of the People'. In the history of Iranian dynasties, his successors, the Qajars, also achieved victory for a tribe. With one of their members making himself Shah of Iran, the Qajar tribe for a time perpetuated tribal hegemony; tribal in origin only, however. In the manner of their rise to power they exploited the tribal strand in the Iranian social complex but later the Qajar Shahs gave the tribes short shrift. One of the deciding influences in the selection of Tehran as the Qajar capital is said to have been this city's proximity to the Qajar grazing and hunting grounds on the Gurgan Steppe, situated to the northeast. At Court along with the clerical leaders the head of the Qajar Khans was a respected personage; as will be seen later, one such head of the family became regent during a royal minority. But the Qajars did not allow the tribes to enjoy great power and, unlike Karim Khan, the eunuch founder of the Qajar dynasty had in him nothing of the *lūtī*.

Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar appealed to force alone and relied on a calculated build-up of strength which had begun several years before at Astarabad, the Qajar stronghold near the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea. His rise to power was marked by pyramids of skulls, holocausts, mass blindings. The city of Kirman, in the

southeast, having been chosen by the last Zand prince as his final refuge, particularly excited Agha Muhammad's ire. Sir John Malcolm writes: 'Nearly twenty thousand women and children were granted as slaves to his soldiers; and all the males who had reached maturity were commanded to be put to death, or to be deprived of their eyesight. Those who escaped his cruelty, owed their safety neither to mercy nor to flight, but to the fatigue of their executioners, who only ceased to be the instruments of glutting the revengeful spirit of their enraged monarch, when they themselves were exhausted with the work of blood.'[1] In a note this author adds: 'When at Shiraz on the fourth of June 1800, I thought that the best mode in which I could celebrate the birthday of our beloved monarch was to distribute alms to the poor' – an act by which, although they probably did not show it, Sir John must have deeply vexed the Iranian authorities – 'a great number assembled, and among them were more than a hundred men whose eyes had been taken out at Kirman', during the terror described above.

After the subjugation of the country, Agha Muhammad Shah made Tehran the centre it has ever since remained. Nomadic habits were to some extent kept up in the royal practice of living in camps in summertime in the vicinity of the city, and in great royal hunting expeditions. But Nadir Shah's swift dashes from one part of the empire to another were gradually supplanted by the Qajar policy of employing an excess of royal male offspring in provincial governorships, so that, in theory at least, the family's dominion over the whole of Iran could be realised. In fact, although the family dominated, the princely governors were not always loyal to their imperial fathers or elder brothers and Fath 'Ali Shah's journey in 1834, after he had reigned from 1797, to chastise a son governing Fars, who had withheld revenue, proved too much for the old Shah. He died at Isfahan on the way.

In girding on the royal sword at his coronation in 1796 Agha Muhammad Shah undertook to support the Shi'ite faith, for the sword was a Safavid relic of symbolic importance. In refusing at the same ceremony the great crown of Nadir Shah, Agha Muhammad showed determination to restore to the crown of Persia all the territories which Nadir had won and which were represented in the tiara by four plumes, for Persia, the Caucasus, Afghanistan and India. Agha Muhammad had already re-established mastery over Georgia and recalled the terror of Persian arms to the Caucasus, for the year before he consented to be crowned he had recaptured Tiflis and redressed the Persian prestige damaged by the Georgian ruler

[1] Sir John Malcolm, op. cit. p. 198.

Heraclius's accommodation of July 1783 with the Empress Catherine of Russia. Taking advantage of the distracted state of Iran after the death of Nadir Shah, the Georgians had thrown off vassaldom to this Muslim power and submitted to their Russian co-religionists. Agha Muhammad Qajar's offensive achieved a success for which not long afterwards his descendants and their people began a protracted process of very dearly paying.

If the cruelty and malice of the first Qajar king are overlooked, the beginnings of the Qajar period were auspicious: security and vigour replaced vulnerability and caprice; a strong central government was again established. Under this the forces which revived were clerical and urban. The city of Qum, only ninety-two miles south of the new capital, became an object of special reverence for Fath 'Ali Shah, Agha Muhammad Shah's successor, who gave its shrine mosque a guilded dome which still glints in the almost uninterrupted sunshine of the Persian Plateau's bright, dry days, and which the Qajars made a shelter of leading Doctors of the Religious Law. These gentlemen, if they were to be kept within easy reach of the Qajar capital at Tehran, had to be treated circumspectly for they could also repair to centres equally if not more holy and venerated at Najaf, Kerbela, Samarra, in Iraq. In the nineteenth century these centres happened to be in Ottoman territory. As the reputed burial place of 'Ali, the scene of the massacre of his martyred children and the place, or the principal one of the places, where the Twelfth Imam was said to have vanished, respectively, they were cities of great sanctity; but Agha Muhammad Shah and Fath 'Ali seem to have been anxious to ensure the support of the religious for their new dynasty, and so to keep the religious authorities in Iran. In this respect a situation reminiscent of that obtaining under the Safavids was being deliberately restored.

Also, it would appear, there was again something of a boom in the astrologers' business. That this was so is indicated by the reference to astrologers at the end of James Morier's description of a royal entry into Tehran, which he witnessed in the year 1814. The description otherwise merits inclusion early in a history of modern Iran as showing how much, in superficialities at least, that nation has changed in just under a hundred and fifty years: 'During all this time I had an opportunity of observing the King, and remarking the different stages of the procession. His Majesty was gaily dressed in a white close vest, embroidered with spangles. His sword, his dagger, and other ornaments were entirely inlaid with precious stones. The bridle, crupper, breast-plate, were all either rubies, diamonds, or emeralds, whilst a long thick tassel of pearls was suspended under

the horse's throat, by a cordon that went round his neck. At different intervals he called for his *Kalioun* (the water pipe), which was brought to him by his Shatir Bashi, or head of the running footmen, from which he took not more than one whiff, which was afterwards emitted in one long white stream of smoke, which he managed to conduct over his beard as a perfume. He was dignified in all he did, and seemed very attentive to all that was going on. As he approached the town, long rows of well-dressed men at some distance from the road made low bows, and whenever he called one near to him he came running with great eagerness, and received whatever he had to say with the greatest devotedness. He was then received by a corps of Mollahs, and *Peishnamaz* (priests) who chaunted . . . with all their might. The oxen, and sheep in great numbers were sacrificed just as he passed, and their heads thrown under his horse's feet. Many glass vases, filled with sugar, were broken before him, and their contents strewed on his road. Everywhere dervishes were making loud exclamations for his prosperity; whilst a band of wrestlers and dancers were twirling about their *mils* (clubs), and performing all sorts of antics to the sound of the copper drums of Looties. Nothing could be more striking than the variety of the scene . . . Amongst the crowd I perceived the whole of the Armenians, headed by their clergy bearing crosses, painted banners, the Gospel, and long candles. They all began to chaunt Psalms as His Majesty drew near; and their zeal was only surpassed by that of the Jews, who also had collected themselves into a body, conducted by their rabbis, who raised on high a carved representation in wood of the tabernacle . . . On coming close to the walls of the city, the crowd of horsemen and people increased to an extraordinary degree, . . . In all the bustle I perceived the King constantly looking at a watch carried by the Shatir Bashi, anxious that he should enter the gates exactly at the time prescribed by the astrologers."[1]

Finally, Qajar resentment of physical vestiges of Safavid splendour, as in mosque and palace buildings, completes the picture of what must be described as imitative rivalry.

Thus in readiness for the impact of the West of the first decades of the nineteenth century, the following props may be judged to have been on the stage. First, there was the tendency to revive the Safavid achievement in establishing a strong central government acting from an as near as possible centrally situated capital city; in taking note of the outside world, with the possibility of judiciously

[1] James Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia*, London, 1818, pp. 387–388.

manipulated contacts with foreign powers; in defining the frontiers of the realm; and in making all areas of the country pay dues in order that the centre might be properly maintained. Second, was the revival of the authority of the religious element in society, which was pandered to as a support for a regime whose founder had sown hatred perhaps only the mediation of the mullas could palliate among the people. Third, the prominence of cities, of Tehran, the capital, with its increasing number of foreign missions, and of provincial centres, the seats of the Prince Governors, who were also visited by foreign embassies. Fourth, the consequent necessity, with this growth in the importance of cities, for landed magnates to cleave to the centres of power and so leave the rural masses to be overseen by intendants and baliffs. Fifth, there was the inevitable growth of bureaucracy.

As central government became re-established, the vazirate, whereby a chief minister shared the task of ruling with the monarch, could be revived. This may be taken to signify the change from sovereignty engaged in winning the country and subduing it, to sovereignty attempting the country's peaceful administration and exploitation. The difference between administering the country and exploiting it was not, unfortunately, very clearly realised by Shahs who had, after all, attained hegemony by a process tantamount to conquest; and in this lies the cardinal weakness in the old system of Persian government. The Shah might be regarded by the people as deliverer and protector; but there remained the question of his relationship with those from whom the people wanted deliverance and protection; and there remained the attitude of mind towards the nation and task of government, inculcated in rulers who had first, in the worst instances, to usurp their position; in the best, to defeat and subject rival leaders.

Whenever the centre weakened, the state disintegrated into autonomous units ruled over by chiefs who ceased to own any authority higher than themselves. The significance of the Iranian royal title of *Shāhanshāh*, King of Kings, is that its holder has defeated, or brought back into vassalage, a number of potentially independent rulers. It is not surprising that a system of monarchy based in the first place on military subjugation should find it hard to differentiate between administering the country and exploiting it. The traditional role of the Iranian vazir has been to ensure that the people are, in fact, administered, not exploited; but the work of educating Shahs and Sultans into what is their proper function has often proved dangerous and only been incompletely successful.

The despot generally chose his chief minister or vazir, not from

the tribes, whose scions would be neither trustworthy nor sufficiently educated, nor from the wealthy classes, for wealth confers its own independence and influence. His choice lay among villagers, who could have received some education from the local mulla, the village cleric, in the local *maktab*, the mulla's school, and who might also be qualified by the possession of that intelligence and shrewdness often found in the settled and prosperous agrarian districts of central Iran – the districts whence many of the heads of the Qajar bureaucracy sprang.

Fath 'Ali Shah gave the clergy every encouragement to exercise their spiritual office and indeed they would also derive encouragement from the return of peace his reign inaugurated. But while he paid considerable attention to glorifying the position of the clergy and embellishing the holy city of Qum, it is interesting that during the reign of Fath 'Ali Shah clerics interfered less in internal than external affairs. Fath 'Ali Shah's obsequiousness to the mullas has been ascribed to his desire to atone for his many carnal sins[1] but, whatever its motives, it did serve to strengthen the religious element and gave the clergy scope, not only to succour the people, but also to revise their own standards of education and intellectual competence. Engaged in these two laudable activities, they did not show signs of desiring to interfere in the political arena until the subsequent reign.

During the reign of Fath 'Ali Shah one of the most notable, and perhaps one of the most controversial, vazirs in modern Iranian history appeared. He was Abu'l Qasim Qa'im Maqam, who rose to prominence as minister to the Crown Prince, 'Abbas Mirza, when the latter was governor of Azerbaijan, the province most immediately threatened by Russian expansion in the Caucasus, and the province given in Qajar times to the Crown Prince. After their defeats in the war against the Russians the Qa'im Maqam and his Prince saw the need for drastic reform of the army. Qa'im Maqam also perceived the danger of obscurantism and there is no doubt that he was averse to the political influence of clerics. His accurate assessment of Iran's backwardness may be judged by his attention to even apparently so small a detail as the style and language of official communications. But in the circumstances of the time this was not a small detail. Under the Safavids, in the hands of an influential clergy whose first language was in many instances Arabic and knowledge of Persian faulty, official Persian had become bombastic, arabicised and obscure. Coupled with the advent of a pompous and clerical style,

[1] Mirza Aminu'd-Daulah's *Political Memoirs*, edited by Hafiz Farma-Farmayan, Tehran, 1962, p. 10.

during the Safavid epoch there had been a decline in lay literature which was sadly out of keeping with the splendours of architecture, and the achievements in carpet weaving, book production, calligraphy and the visual arts generally. There had also, under the Safavid despotism, been other reasons which necessitated a kind of writing, in government and diplomatic documents, sufficiently obscure for the writer, if necessary, to shelter behind his own ambiguities of expression. Qa'im Maqam set about purifying Persian prose as well as organising some semblance of a modern and efficient bureaucracy. He was aware of the urgency of reform in an Iran which from 1800 had become a matter of jealous concern to stronger and more advanced foreign powers. In addition, the times brought the resumption of diplomatic correspondence with foreign powers. This renewed diplomatic correspondence called for clarity and firmness which could only be achieved through clarity of mind and firmness of purpose in the face of new dangers.

A letter of Qa'im Maqam to the English envoy, Sir John Malcolm, which was recently published in Tehran,[1] illustrates how far this great Persian Minister lived up to his ideals. But he was a solitary figure. With the exception of his master, Prince 'Abbas Mirza, and, at the most, one or two others, there was no one in high places who did not continue to display ignorance of the world outside Iran, ignorance of Iran itself, ignorance of everything not immediately connected with their own surroundings, rivalries, petty personal ambitions, exercises in graft, secret self-indulgences, hypocrisy and dissimulation.

Qa'im Maqam's turn came to provide an example of how dangerous the role of zealous vazir could be. Prince 'Abbas Mirza predeceased his father, Fath 'Ali Shah, and on the latter's death in 1834 'Abbas Mirza's son, Muhammad Shah, was placed on the throne – largely through the intervention of the British Military Mission then in Azerbaijan, but with the blessing also of the Russians, who had been anxious to ensure the succession of 'Abbas Mirza's line.

This succession marked the first indication of foreign concern over who should rule Iran, and it also ensured that the seeds of decay in the state began to thrive. Muhammad Shah had reached the throne – been in fact somewhat hastily and unceremoniously fetched to it – over the heads of numerous rivals. Fath 'Ali Shah had over three hundred sons and had thus augmented to a considerable degree the ranks of a potentially jobless and irresponsible élite. The situation on Muhammad Shah's accession meant that the throne was surrounded by two dangerous categories of men, hostile rivals and flattering

[1] *Rahnama-ye-Kitab*, 'Guide to Books', May, 1962, p. 214.

seekers for exploitable royal favours. Only a very strong and clear-minded Shah could have kept these forces under control. Muhammad Shah was neither, and the state of his mind was not improved by the spiritual exercises in which he followed his vazir, Hajji Mirza Aghasi. Very soon after coming to power he listened to rumours inimicable to Qa'im Maqam and found in them support for his own desire to be rid of a minister who wrote letters to him like a school-master and was constantly reiterating disagreeable facts with no leavening whatever of pleasant fictions. Qa'im Maqam was summoned to a royal garden near Tehran and strangled.

Hajji Mirza Aghasi, the new vazir or *Sadr-i-A'zam*, initiated the Shah in the path of Sufi mysticism and asceticism, so that the two men at the head of affairs came to be known as the two 'dervishes'. Mirza Aghasi has been much denigrated, both during his own life time and subsequently. Indeed the reign which he and Muhammad Shah inaugurated was a disastrous one, lasting from 1834 to 1848. But other factors, besides the probably greatly exaggerated incompetence of Mirza Aghasi, have to be taken into consideration, for the weakening of royal power was by no means lost on him and was a danger he tried to avert. His very interest in Sufism might be ascribed to the realisation of whence the danger most immediately came. It could have been an attempt to obviate the hold on the people that was gradually being gained by the official representatives of religion, the mullas. They had seen their chance in the confusions surrounding Muhammad Shah's accession and in the increasing ubiquitousness of foreign influences. The latter while, together with 'Abbas Mirza's reforming zeal, they put the mullas on their mettle against an over-rapid modernisation that could ultimately deny them power over the masses of the people, also gave them the chance to intrigue. Increasing foreign influence enabled the mullas to excite the antipathy of the masses against infidel strangers and, incidentally, against a Shah who seemed inclined to religious unorthodoxy. Thus Mirza Aghasi's proposed weapon, Sufism, against the clerics turned against him; while the clerics profited also from the menace being posed by Christian powers from without, and could in addition carry their intrigues among those powers.

During the reign of Muhammad Shah two classes began seriously to affect the internal political situation. Firstly, there was the idle aristocracy which former royal uxoriousness and the cessation of civil wars had spawned and helped to multiply. Secondly, the clerics. As for the aristocracy, with the Shah weak the moment seemed to have come when defeated rivals to the throne and subjugated notables could forswear overt battle and need not any longer in-

dulge in smouldering resentment. Instead they found they could plunder the people under the aegis of the throne, and that they could decrease the effectiveness of monarchy and government by playing on the Shah's gullibility and conducting vendettas among themselves and particularly against anyone who, as the Qa'im Maqam had done, showed signs of being able to curb their influence. The clerics allied themselves with those of the notables whom they could isolate to their side; already they, too, were becoming ranged against the Crown.

A by no means insignificant contributing factor in the weakening of the Crown was the wider scope and growing incentive foreign powers found for interfering in Iran's affairs and adopting, for instance, that patronising and contemptuous attitude which was to mark Iran's relations with Russia and Great Britain for many years.

Finally, the Shah's unworldliness and Mirza Aghasi's dishonesty or incompetence, or both, sowed the seeds of Iran's financial woes. Fath 'Ali Shah had erred on the side of avarice, but he had prevented expenditure outrunning income, a situation which became prevalent under his successor. Fath 'Ali Shah had not wanted to spend money on the army – a fact to which 'Abbas Mirza's lack of success against the Russians can partly be ascribed – but at least in his time there had been an army. In the next reign the army became a bare-footed rabble, and the recently secured province of Khurasan again broke out in rebellion. Thus Iran constituted a source of growing anxiety and solicitude to the British, and a field of increasingly possible diplomatic manoeuvring for the Russians. Iranian backwardness ceased to be a private matter; Iranian shame and incapacity were now to be known all over the world. Dignity was forfeited while Iran's independence was threatened.

Chapter 3

New Relationships Become Established

HERAT is a city of great beauty, although no longer the centre of the arts and crafts that it was under the immediate descendants of Timur-i-Lang, 'Tamburlaine', in the fifteenth century. Then the great miniaturist, Behzad, and the great poet, Jami, flourished there. New buildings, mosques, schools and royal tombs, were embellished and ancient structures preserved. Because of the recollection of this city's once noble role in the patronage of the arts, Herat is dear to Iranians, although since the early nineteenth century it has been an Afghan city at a considerable distance from the Persian border. Muhammad Shah's chief bid militarily to justify his possession of the Qajar crown, crown of the Shāhanshāh, was his attempt three years after Fath 'Ali Shah's death to establish Persian rule again over Herat and the western margin of Afghanistan. In this he was acting contrary to the wishes of England, but in conformity with those of Russia, a procedure characteristic of his policy towards those who had laboured so hard in November 1834 to make possible his peaceful accession to the throne.

The extent to which Muhammad Shah and his first minister, the modernising Qa'im Maqam, had realised the danger of seeming under too great an obligation to England is indicated by their delays in responding to the exhortations of the envoy, Sir John Campbell, that they should prepare for the old king, Fath 'Ali Shah's, death. In the end Sir John paid for the necessary military preparations himself. The new Shah did his best to make it seem as if his entry into the capital was normal and not contrived by foreign assistance. The Qa'im Maqam, meanwhile, probably had other fish to fry: his procrastinations were as pointed as the young Shah's, but not coordinated with them. The Russian representative, Simonitch, was at Tehran almost as soon as the British mission, of which a member, arriving early in 1835, could already describe the Russian Minister as a 'rival' – but only to say that it was 'comfortable and pleasant for the English to have so gentlemanly and courteous a rival as the Count to deal with'.[1]

[1] J. Baillie Fraser, *Travels in Koordistan, Mesopotamia etc.*, London, 1840, Vol. II, p. 244.

Although, as shown in the preceding chapter, the Qa'im Maqam is generally regarded as a pioneer in reform and an illustrious patriot, Baillie Fraser describes him as Muhammad Shah's evil genius, and as of a dictatorial disposition. The Minister's schoolmasterly attitude towards a not over-prepossessing prince apart, a tendency to concentrate power in his own hands would accord perfectly with his zeal for reform. In Iran, the more efficient and professionally zealous an official, the greater is his urge to take into his own hands as much of the direction of affairs as possible, if only to counteract the maladroitness and venality of others. It is, however, conceivable that the British observer's lack of enthusiasm for this great Iranian was due to the suspicion that the latter was more pro-Russian than pro-British; a suspicion possibly due to the Qa'im Maqam's whole policy in the sphere of foreign relations being to keep both powers at bay. He dreaded their strengthening hold on his country and would try and avoid showing favour to either of them or becoming beholden to them.

By the time of Muhammad Shah's succession, the cards were down and a game beginning in real earnest that was to make Iran an object of special concern for many years to come in the foreign affairs of Britain and Russia. The Qa'im Maqam did not long survive the accession of the new king, a fact which, if their design was to have a weak and ill-guided Shah, might have caused the British mission satisfaction. When the Qa'im Maqam was murdered they as well as Muhammad Shah were freed of the great Vazir's somewhat peremptory and generally speaking extremely realistic tone and appraisal of affairs. However, the Herat episode must soon have dispelled any illusions that the British might have held about being able to influence Muhammad Shah; but in order to understand the situation at the time of the Shah's campaign against Herat, it will be necessary to refer again in greater detail to the events and dispositions leading up to it.

British concern over Iranian affairs, which had been so signally demonstrated by Sir John Campbell's and Sir Henry Lindsay Bethune's strenuous measures to bring Fath 'Ali Shah's grandson to the throne, had begun in 1800 and had then been motivated by two factors: Napoleon's plans for an attack on India, and the situation in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan between 1793 and 1800 a ruler called Zaman Shah had gained ascendancy over his rivals and then begun to entertain thoughts of invading northern India: thoughts based on many historical precedents provided by those who ruled in the Hindu Kush. His first Indian expeditions were not entirely without success. Hence they finally brought him face to face with

the British who were just moving into the Punjab, where the Sikh rulers were in power. On Zaman Shah's western flank, his relations with the Qajar ruler, Agha Muhammad, were far from good; his first Indian campaign had in fact been cut short when the Qajar seized the capital of Khurasan, Meshed, and deposed a survivor of Nadir Shah of Persia there, the unfortunate Shahrukh, in 1796. Shahrukh had managed to retain this eastern vestige of Nadir Shah's extensive but ephemeral empire because Karim Khan the Zand had never attempted to conquer Khurasan, and because the Durrani ruler of Afghanistan had helped him. Its successful annexation by the new ruler of Persia was Zaman Shah's warning of a rising power on his western frontier.

Zaman Shah's apprehensions on this score were not lost on the British in India who in 1799 urged the second Qajar ruler, Fath 'Ali Shah, to move eastwards against the Afghan potentate. In the event Zaman Shah succeeded in persuading his Iranian neighbour not to advance, but in 1801 Sir John Malcolm's first mission to Iran from India resulted in a treaty of mutual aid between Hajji Ibrahim Khan, the Persian Prime Minister, on behalf of the Shah, and Captain John Malcolm, on the part of the Marquis Wellesley, Governor General of India. Article II provided for the Iranian monarch's laying waste Zaman Shah's dominions should he 'ever show a resolution to invade India'. Article IV rather obliquely brought in the French threat: if ever a king of the Afghans 'or any person of the French nation' were to act hostilely towards Iran, England was to send arms and men to the aid of the injured party. Article V was more explicit: if a French army attempted to settle in any part of Iran, the two contracting states were to join in its expulsion and 'extirpation'. Moreover, the Shah was to refuse any 'great men of the French nation' permission to reside in Persia. In the course of this renewed British attempt to establish diplomatic relations with Iran – it was the first since Sir Dodmore Cotton's embassy in the 1620's – a Commercial Treaty was concluded, by which security for British and Indian merchants was guaranteed and the right given them to establish themselves in Iranian cities, building such houses and stores as they required. It also established that a duty of not more than one per cent should be levied on purchases from British sources, of iron, lead, steel, broadcloth and other staple commodities. Thus, while strategic matters connected with Napoleon's threat to India and with the curbing of a power which might grow too strong in Afghanistan were dealt with, the foundations were also laid for an Iranian and British-Indian mercantile relationship.

French dealings with Fath 'Ali Shah at this period were concen-

trated on the defeat of Great Britain through India. This scheme was to be taken up again and was again to include a drive through Iran, when the Bolsheviks after the First World War saw in subversion of India a means of damaging England. As Napoleon's ambitious plan had done this project came to nothing, but Napoleon's invasion of Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century cannot be so lightly dismissed. It did not result in the wider achievements in oriental conquest he had dreamed of, but it did result in a diversion of British forces and attention. Moreover in its far-reaching psychological effects the defeat of the Muslims in Egypt by a European power began a new series of events and the adoption of new attitudes in the Muslim Middle East which have coloured its relations with the West and its internal politics, especially in the matter of reforms, ever since. Napoleon's Egyptian campaign opened an unprecedented kind of relationship between Europe and the Muslim world, compounded on one side of patronage and often contempt and on the other, of extreme self-consciousness and a feeling of shame and inadequacy; Napoleon brought Europe as a victor into the heart of Islam. So far as French relations with Iran were concerned, after the treaty of 1801 with John Malcolm, Fath 'Ali Shah in 1802 began a period of flirtation with the French culminating in the Treaty of Finkenstein of 1807, to provide mutual aid against Russia and Britain. The Shah was doubtless more anxious to gain the advantage over Russia than to uphold a somewhat negative friendship with England.

His education in European diplomacy was, however, soon to include a shock, with the result that the British position was ultimately left stronger. A French military mission arrived under General Gardanne, and, despite subsequent fluctuations in the diplomatic situation, this laid the basis of an enduring Franco-Iranian cultural bond. But in the same year as the Treaty of Finkenstein, Napoleon adopted a fresh Russian policy and Iranian disenchantment over the Treaty of Tilsit was shortly afterwards sternly realised when Russia seized Nakhchavan and Erivan, cities Agha Muhammad Khan had reoccupied only twelve years before. In 1808 Sir John Malcolm returned to encompass the departure of Gardanne's mission, which moved away in most embarrassing and ignominious circumstances. This time, however, contemplating the example of Finkenstein, England did not limit negotiation to agents of the East India Company alone: the Governor General's representative was seized with wrath and dismay by the arrival of Sir Harford-Jones in Tehran from London as a newly created Baronet empowered to negotiate another Anglo-Iranian Treaty on behalf of the King of England, not

the Governor General of India. An Iranian mission was received in London in 1809, and the first batch of Persian students to be sent to Europe followed in the next year.

These events committed Iran to more complicated relations, no longer with Europe's outposts, but now directly with European governments and capitals. The European reaction to this new association with an eastern power soon manifested itself in literary works about Persia. Notable were James Morier's two volumes of *Travels in Persia*, of which the first appeared in 1812, after the Harford-Jones' mission. Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, incidentally, appeared in the same year and the poet could draw on an already fairly extensive literature about Persia. There were, for example, the works of Sir William Jones and d'Herbelot, the great British and French pioneers in Persian studies; the books of eighteenth-century travellers like Tavernier; and translations of Persian poetry, such as Nott's and Sir William Jones' essays in translating Hafiz – Nott's *Select Odes from the Persian Poet Hafez* had been published in 1787. In the famous lines,

> There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream,
> And the nightingale sings round it all day long;
> In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet dream,
> To sit in the roses and hear the birds' song . . .

Thomas Moore culled an error from Morier's 1812 travelogue where he confused the name of the *band* or dam 'of the Amir' with the name of the river, the Kur near Shiraz, whose waters it was made to conserve. Mistakes abounded in the early manifestations of the European awakening to the existence of Persia; but it was an awakening productive of an enlargement of cultural interest too striking to be overlooked in the study of modern Iran and its impact on the West and the West's impact on it; while it should not be forgotten that this fresh cultural interest was often at variance with political and economic motives.

In 1815 Sir John Malcolm published his *History of Persia*, with its shrewd and penetrating description of the contemporary Iranian scene. Perhaps he was aiming to correct some of the erroneous impressions spread by romantic notions of the orient then becoming current among Europeans seeking novel objects for the imagination in a non-Christian ethos, but, none the less, his work remains one of the monuments of this nineteenth century European cultural exploration and expansion. In his Preface he says it is his aim to make the English reader more acquainted 'with the history and condition

of a people, who have in most ages acted a conspicuous part in the theatre of the world; and who have of late acquired peculiar claims to our attention, from the nature of their relations to British India and from the renewal of intercourse with the states of Europe.' New activity in oriental political relations was serving a new movement in European culture.

However, up to 1813 Iran's relations with European powers had only advanced slightly beyond the first probes in new areas of diplomatic possibilities and necessities; having been primarily motivated by the Powers' need to contain their own conflicting interests, Iran of itself was only a pawn or a kind of Tom Tiddler's ground. In the game of Great Power rivalries her role has continued to be of this negative and therefore stultifying and invidious sort.

1813, however, showed a stepping-up of pressure: a little of Tom Tiddler's ground was purloined when, under the terms of the Treaty of Gulistan with Russia, Iran lost claims on Georgia and Caucasian cities like Derbend, Baku, Shirvan and Ganja. By the Treaty of Turkomanchai in 1828 Persian claims to territory north of the Aras were finally annulled, but henceforth territorial encroachments were not part of the game; neither Russia nor Britain could threaten Persian sovereignty over Persian soil without risking war between them or narrowing the void it was expedient to have separating their respective empires.

After the Treaty of Gulistan Iran made a last effort to regain the initiative in relations with Russia. This boldness may be attributed to the protests of the clerics and their allies in the Court of Tehran, not to the vanity of the Qa'im Maqam and his master, the Crown Prince 'Abbas Mirza, in Tabriz. The Prince Governor and his Minister in Azerbaijan were vain of their supposed military prowess, with the British military mission already helping them to form a modern type of army. Also the Qa'im Maqam was probably correct in perceiving that if the offensive were not again attempted it would be lost for ever. It is an interesting comment on his assessment of the strength of the Russians in the Caucasus at that time that so normally realistic a statesman should have thought such an attempt could be successful; and yet the pressure on his Prince cannot be ignored which resulted from clerical urging that only 'infidels' hesitated to fight infidels.

Outside the province of Azerbaijan it was the religious leaders who raised the war cry, shocked at the invasion of Iranian territory by an infidel power. Thus it chanced that scope for blackmail by the religious classes was afforded over the Crown Prince 'Abbas Mirza and his modernist vazir; they conformed, with readiness

to fight Russia. Fath 'Ali Shah was in agreement with none of the war parties because he was reluctant to face the expense of another war with Russia. He saw in the accession of the Tsar Nicholas and arrival of Prince Menchikoff, a new Russian plenipotentionary at Tehran, the chance of a peaceful settlement without further Iranian humiliation and loss. The Imam Jum'a, the leading religious authority of Isfahan, headed a procession of the divines of that city to protest the desirability of *jihad*, holy war, against the Christian enemy. This religious agitation concurred with the agitation of the war party in Tehran, headed by Allah Yar Khan, the Asafu'd-Daulah, chief of the Tehran vazirate, who was no doubt impelled by suspicion of the possibility of Russia's support of 'Abbas Mirza as future Shah and, therefore, the intriguing assumption that a second war with Russia might lead to 'Abbas Mirza's final discomfiture in both the foreign military field and the field of internal rivalries. Faced with clerical and courtly pressure in favour of war, Fath 'Ali Shah was compelled to return Prince Menchikoff's passports and in 1826 Iran again took up arms against Russia.

The outcome of this contest was the Treaty of Turkomanchai, the driving home of the lesson administered by the Treaty of Gulistan fifteen years before. Particularly significant was the way in which the Russians occupied and held the city of Tabriz hostage for the indemnity by which they made the careful, if not parsimonious, Shah utterly quail. This Russian technique foreshadowed the events which *mutatis mutandis* were several times to be repeated and be a threat to Iran during the next 130 years. In the light of future history the crucial point lay in the third Article of the Protocol to this Treaty. Article VI required an indemnity of 20 million roubles. The warning note was in the Protocol; if the indemnity were not paid within six months, Russia promised to separate the province of Azerbaijan from the rest of the country 'forever'.

There were British officers on the scene at Turkomanchai, and so by this Treaty Iran not only had a foretaste of a long financial involvement with Russia, but also became aware of the power, for good or ill, of Russia's British rivals; for Great Britain was there to use her 'good offices', on her guard against Russian attempts to step too far and too irrevocably into Tom Tiddler's ground.

Henry Ellis and James Morier had revised the already existing Anglo-Iranian treaty in 1814, arranging that if Iran were attacked by a European power and British mediation was unavailing Britain would grant a subsidy of £200,000. This amendment excluded the financial help which the Treaty had originally allowed for, when the French peril was at its height, if Iran took the offensive. Therefore

after the Iranian offensive of 1826 against Russia, the question of the subsidy need not have arisen. That it did arise was due to Fath 'Ali Shah's agony over Russia's financial demands and to Great Britain's desire to see Russia's hold on Azerbaijan relaxed as soon as possible. Great Britain granted the Shah a subsidy of £200,000 and Russia withdrew from Tabriz, while the Azerbaijan frontier along the River Aras was defined and further Russian military aggression averted; although the Russians had perceived how strong a lever finance could be in relations with their southern neighbour.

Fath 'Ali Shah's troubles were not over: he now had to turn his attention to disorders at home. His sons were already anticipating the accession struggle which his death would doubtless bring, and which the Russians had anticipated in those clauses of the Treaty of Turkomanchai intended to limit the accession to 'Abbas Mirza and his heirs. One of the royal offspring who was the Governor of Fars withheld revenue – a usual sign that the Shah was thought to be growing feeble.

The restlessness of the country could be attributed to the success of Russian arms and to the arrival of an increasing number of foreigners: to the damage done to the Shah's prestige by his defeat at the hands of Russia; and to the agitation of rival ambitions among notables, and the apprehensions among the people which were excited by the presence of foreigners. These factors were equal in potency to Fath 'Ali Shah's old age.

The people were disturbed by the warnings of the religious classes against those infidels to whom territories had been lost. The nobles were beginning to see in the presence of foreign missions new and interesting avenues for intrigue, and as the Treaty of Turkomanchai showed the Russians intent upon powerfully backing the future sovereignty of one particular branch of the royal house, ambitious men perceived the possibility of using the presence and power of foreigners to gain personal ends.

To explain this further it is useful to refer to the observer James Baillie Frazer who, writing in 1835 and describing villagers recently the victims of oppression, said that 'there is almost always a contest of finesse between them and their masters – on the one part to conceal, on the other to extort . . .'. The key words here are 'contest of finesse', a conception which in Persian society can be extended a long way beyond relations between villagers and their *arbābs*, masters. As a modern political scientist has shown,[1] perpetual bargaining lies at the root of Iranian politics; a perpetual 'contest of finesse'.

[1] Leonard Binder, *Iran, Political Development in a Changing Society*, California, 1962.

Thus the presence of foreigners introduced a new and influential factor. On traditional grounds the foreigner's behests could always meet with respect because, with the exception of the more intransigent of the clerical classes, he was not generally regarded as the intruder which in fact he was, but rather, he was considered a guest; wherein lies one aspect of the tragedy of modern Iran. As a guest the foreigner was entitled to certain traditional privileges and courtesies. For his part he might never penetrate the innermost secrets of those Iranians with whom he was in contact, but this would aid rather than hinder clever Iranians, intent upon purely personal aims, using the psychological ascendancy which the foreigner-guest had over the masses of the people to serve their own ends; and this they quickly began to do. A process began of making foreigners 'front-men' for private advantage; a system of behaviour which the increasing tempo of modernism in Iran today and changes in Great Power politics are only just beginning to render ineffective and obsolete. Ministers and courtiers certainly had to make concessions to the foreigner; the accounts of early visitors to Iran describe many episodes in which it is easy to imagine how galled the pride of great Iranian notables must have been. But the intriguers and ambitious Persian noblemen could afford to swallow their pride when possibilities appeared of gulling their fellow countrymen by manipulating gullible foreigners. It was not long before those influential Iranians who chose to establish foreign contacts saw the value of, as the Persians say, 'having their backs warm' – warmed by the caresses of foreign agents, to whom they appeared to be so helpful but whose causes they espoused to forward their own. Foreign patronage was found extremely tempting: it was easy to overcome rivals and to mislead timid compatriots with the air of being 'in the know', knowing what the British or the Russians wanted and being able to hint darkly at the consequences of their wants going unsatisfied. The scope foreign contracts afforded local intriguers was an important feature of Iran's entanglement with the Great Powers.

One of the most flagrant examples of the mixture of intrigue and passion wrapped round Iran's involvement with the affairs and personalities of other nations occurred very soon after the signing of the Treaty of Turkomanchai. The famous Russian writer A. S. Griboedov took a leading part in negotiating the Treaty and in 1829 came to Tehran as Russian Minister. At the village of Turkomanchai the Persian Court had been represented by 'Abbas Mirza and the Qa'im Maqam and Azerbaijan had been the focus of attention. After the Treaty matters were again referred to the capital, hence Griboedov's arrival there.

As might be expected Griboedov was the cynosure of bitterness over the Treaty, and although he received Griboedov with his customary courtesy Fath 'Ali Shah shared the general sentiment. But in the events which quickly followed it is unlikely that Fath 'Ali Shah was Griboedov's enemy; in view of his great prudence, it is more probable that the Shah would have wished to be the Russian envoy's friend. As the late D. P. Costello has pointed out,[1] Griboedov was most probably the victim of a Persian court intrigue arising from the Treaty of Turkomanchai's guarantee of the succession to the throne for Prince 'Abbas Mirza and his heirs. This was the condition of Russia's continued support of the Qajar dynasty, and, incidentally, almost certainly a cardinal point in the schemes of the Qa'im Maqam, anxious to ensure his master's elevation and his own future influence. Great Britain could see in this provision hope that conflict for the succession would be avoided and Russia prevented from taking advantage of a civil war. Russia hoped that by ensuring 'Abbas Mirza's succession she could further consolidate her influence in what Griboedov, in this context, called 'Asia'.

In the second place the Treaty emphasised Russia's pose as protector of Christians. Numbers of Caucasian Christians lived in Iran and since Russia had made Caucasia part of the Russian empire, people of Caucasian origin could claim Russian protection. If they were Armenian or Georgian Christians by birth but had fallen into the hands of Muslims they could turn to the northern Christian power. Under the terms of the Treaty of Turkomanchai natives of the provinces ceded to Russia who had been carried off to Iran were specifically promised protection. This was interpreted as valid for people who had turned Muslim, the assumption being that they had done so under duress. On this hinged Griboedov's murder in Tehran in February 1829.

A royal eunuch called Mirza Ya'qub and originally an Armenian from Erivan had been captured and forced into Iran. There he had turned Muslim and, as have many slaves throughout the history of Islam, had attained to a position of great influence at court. His skill at book-keeping had facilitated his rise to the post of treasurer of the Shah's household. When Griboedov reached Tehran, Mirza Ya'qub, perhaps, encouraged to do so by insinuating courtiers, or perhaps seizing the opportunity to escape before certain aspects of his book-keeping were too closely scrutinised, decided to avail himself of the provisions of the Treaty of Turkomanchai. He took refuge in the Russian Legation.

[1]Articles in *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, Vol. V, 1954, Vol. VIII, 1958, and *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. XI, 1961.

This distressed Fath 'Ali Shah. His usual excessive anxiety over money would naturally cause him great disquiet over the defection of his treasurer. Also some sources not implausibly suggest that the Shah was thinking of the eunuch's intimate knowledge of court life, useful knowledge to the Russians in extending their hold on Iran. The Russian Minister was required to give up Mirza Ya'qub and refused, which added to the Shah's anger and anxiety. This was the moment for opportunists to act. The king's fury gave the court party, which was in opposition to Russia and also in opposition to Prince 'Abbas Mirza, a cover under which to proceed. This party included one of 'Abbas Mirza's brothers, Prince 'Ali Shah, the Governor of Tehran, and a likely contestant for the throne – in fact on Fath 'Ali Shah's death he did reign for a short time as 'Adil Shah. When Griboedov arrived in Tehran, Prince 'Ali Shah had not been at home to him on the occasion of the envoy's courtesy call. Prominent in this party was Allah Yar Khan, the same minister who had been eager for the recent war against Russia.

Mirza Ya'qub was formally charged by the Iranian authorities at a later date with having embezzled funds but his personal property was seized at the very moment when the Russians sent to have it collected ready for the refugee to take away with him on his departure under Russian protection for Armenia. The next episode, and the whole affair happened in the course of a very few days, was the escape of two ladies from the retinue of Allah Yar Khan himself. One of these inmates of his harem was Armenian and the other of German extraction; both originated in Erivan and both had professed Islam, and now they sought refuge with Griboedov. Their behaviour, for they appear to have been very uncertain about what they really wanted or about their desire for repatriation, lends support to the notion that they may well have been planted on the Russians by their scheming master. Because of the part Allah Yar Khan, the Asafu'd-Daulah, had played in encouraging the Shah to go to war with Russia, he was particularly vehement in denouncing the treaty that followed and which only a second war could expunge. As an intriguer against 'Abbas Mirza and his vazir, the Qa'im Maqam, it might also have occurred to Allah Yar Khan that such a war would result in a further defeat for the Prince and yet another blow to his 'model' army, of which his opponents in Tehran were still very much afraid, despite its recent failures.

This may seem incredible in view of what had just happened in a war with Russia, but intriguers of Allah Yar Khan's calibre are more preoccupied with their own highly personal and immediate aims than with either a fore- or hind-sighted vision of any given situation.

The immediate aim was still the ousting of 'Abbas Mirza from the succession stakes; if one war with Russia had not achieved this, but had in fact, by the Treaty of Turkomanchai's protection of his right to succeed, strengthened 'Abbas Mirza's position, then another war might be tried, in the hope that this time the plot would succeed.

The presence in the Russian legation of the two ladies was a far more fruitful source of propaganda than the defection of the eunuch had been. They were the dependants of a great man and were of the Muslim faith, being kept, it was claimed, against their will by the infidel in his legation. The chief Mujtahid of Tehran, Mirza Masih, issued a *fatwa*, a religious decree, which was tit-for-tat for certain provisions in the Treaty of Turkomanchai; it said it was the duty of Muslims to rescue co-religionists from non-believers, as the Treaty implied that a Christian power could rescue Christian captives from Muslims.

Neither Fath 'Ali Shah, as a former episode which involved the British Chargé d'Affaires in 1822, Henry Willock, had shown, nor his successor, Muhammad Shah, as an episode involving Mr. McNeill in 1837 was to show, had over-much respect for diplomatic immunity. Fath 'Ali Shah had had Willock threatened with decapitation: Muhammad Shah had a courier of McNeill's captured and robbed of his papers. In the circumstances the forebodings that Griboedov had from all accounts felt on returning to Iran, particularly on the score of Allah Yar Khan's 'personal enmity', were well founded. On February 11th 1829 they were unpleasantly fulfilled when, with one exception, Griboedov and his staff were massacred.

Some Russian writers have shown an undue readiness to accept exactly the kind of rumour Iranian intrigue used to thrive on: in particular the rumour that the English, whose envoy was a personal friend of Griboedov, had connived in the assassination. In fact it was just the sort of episode that the English desired least; it might have given rise to renewed hostilities between Iran and Russia with the forces of the latter taking over and retaining Northern Iran. The French Consul in Tabriz, reporting to his superior the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, hinted that if any foreign power had connived in Griboedov's murder, it was probably Turkey, then at war with Russia and therefore not averse to embroiling that power in another war with Persia. But no foreign intervention need be adduced to explain Griboedov's murder. Iranian sense of the dignity of a host, and the Iranians' nice appreciation of how essential it is not to become too far committed, have made such incidents as the murder of foreigners extremely unusual; and in the two outstanding incidents of this type of action – excluding cases in which tribesmen

have been involved – the explanation can be found in political intrigue among Iranians themselves. It seems more than probable that Griboedov was the sacrifice required by the resentment of Prince 'Abbas Mirza's rivals over the clauses in the Treaty binding the succession to his line. These schemers thought Griboedov was the Russian agent sent to see that these provisions were carried out. In this they were not far wrong. Their mistake was to suppose that the liquidation of one foreign representative would keep replacements away, or terminate the Great Powers' long-term policies.

That February day when the Russians were done to death was a great occasion for the religious leaders, for it was they who aroused the mob to invest the foreign legation. But as may often be seen on close examination of those political events in which the religious element has been prominent, the function of the divines was subordinate to the background activity of secular political intriguers. The mullas were simply the instruments used to provoke the rabble, creating the clamour under whose cover the politicians' objective was to be gained.

The efficacy of religion as an agent in the hands of political intriguers was due to the superstitions of the populace and the populace's need for an outlet. The rage and emotions that oppression and injustice had built up in people who were generally passive and easily overawed were ready tinder for the spark of clerical authority sanctioning an outburst. On this occasion, in 1829, passions were enflamed against the Russian Mission, but we shall see later how on another occasion Iranian exponents of Babism were made the objects of popular emotions, at a time when another outlet of pent-up feelings was required. These are peripheral aspects of an event like Griboedov's murder, to be added to the sum total of forces and motives involved in such an episode.

Fath 'Ali Shah was shocked by what had happened, but he had been unable to do anything to prevent it. The mob was in control and when the news of the outrage they had committed reached him, Fath 'Ali Shah's horror may be considered to have been at least as great as his fears of the consequences.

However, the consequences were not so grave as the Shah might legitimately have anticipated. His anxiety at the time of the incident is proved by his solicitude for the sole survivor of the Russian Mission, Maltsev. It is interesting to note that the Shah was joined in care for Maltsev by the chief Mujtahid; this indicates that the leading religious authority's sentiments were in favour of more cautious dealings than those which had rashly been incited by other members of the religious heirarchy. Fath 'Ali Shah's contrition, in addition to

their other preoccupations, made the Russian Government lenient and Griboedov's death was not allowed to become the cause of further conflict.

Collision with a foreign power did not occur again until 1837 when Fath 'Ali Shah's successor made a bid for the city of Herat. This episode may, just as can Griboedov's murder, be attributed to the situation brought into being by the Treaty of Turkomanchai. On this occasion the English were the enemy and it was the Russians who encouraged Muhammad Shah in a parade of troops to retrieve a part of his dominions, round the attractive valley of the Hari Rud, which had long since been lost to Iran. The life of this fertile valley centred on the city of Herat which commands routes southward to the cities of Kabul and Kandahar and on to India. Herat was therefore a point on the map carefully watched by the British authorities in India. Under Article VIII of the Treaty of Turkomanchai, Russia secured freedom for navigation on the Caspian Sea and the right to land on the Caspian shores, but these privileges were too remote at that time from British interests to arouse energetic British suspicions. British apprehensions were more likely over the provisions of Article XI, whereby Russia was given the right to appoint Consuls and Commercial Agents (with a retinue of not more than ten persons) wherever their presence could be justified. This was the rubric which sprang into prominence in 1837 because if Iran captured Herat there were grounds for supposing that Russia might place representatives there, perilously close to India.

Aside from these long-term considerations, an Iranian delegation to India as early as 1802 had recognised the existence of Afghanistan as a separate state, and the city of Herat was indubitably in Afghanistan. It was therefore in spite of British protests that the Shah persisted in his march to Herat, as a result of which the British broke off relations, their envoy being gravely insulted in the process. In 1839 Lord Palmerston refused officially to receive Husain Khan, the Iranian envoy sent to London. Ultimately the British point was gained and Herat not occupied by the Persians. Nevertheless, Russian expansion in Asia continued and, while insults had to be expiated, Lord Palmerston could not afford to leave the British post at Tehran vacant for too long. Friendly relations were resumed by 1841 and in 1843 a British officer was included in the mixed commission which Russia initiated to begin work on the problem of Iran's frontier with Turkey. (The British officer in question was Colonel, later Sir, John Fenwick Williams and he was accompanied to Erzerum by the Hon. Robert Curzon, author of *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*.)

Chapter 4

Nasiru'd-Din Shah's Heritage

As one historian of the Qajar period remarked, the conduct of Muhammad Shah's vazir, Hajji Mirza Aghasi, a person generally held in slight esteem by Iranians, while not deserving 'the high opinion which he entertained of his own performances'[1] was nevertheless sufficiently effective to prevent Iran disintegrating either into autonomous principalities or appanages of Russia in Asia and Britain in India. In spite of his 'dervishism', the vazir was not slow to realise that an influential Iranian nobleman in the eighteen-forties could personally profit from the new contacts with neighbouring powers. The Russian and British policies included commercial considerations as well as strategic aims. Mirza Aghasi perceived, as many of his class were to do, that in the new age then dawning landed estates were no longer useful merely as the source of food supplies for the absentee-landlord's palace and numerous dependants in the city; and no longer of the significance as reservoirs of manpower in times of civil war that they had been in less settled epochs. The settlement imposed on Iran by Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar had not been completely abrogated and Russian and British efforts to prevent any major internal explosion had been effective; also the nobility's new preoccupations, the product of contacts with foreign powers, further inhibited serious outbreaks of internal conflict.

One of the consequences of the Russian interest in buying exports from northern Iran, and British trading activities in the south, was that during Nasiru'd-Din Shah's reign the Iranian landed proprietor gradually ceased to be an influential and patriarchal protector or arbiter in a domestic, independent, locally balanced and locally sufficing agrarian system, and became instead a large-scale profiteer able to dispose of cash-crops, such as cotton, opium, silk, dried fruits and nuts, in foreign markets.

This change is exemplified in Mirza Aghasi's schemes for developing certain aspects of Iran's internal resources. He revived the cultivation of the mulberry-tree in the Kirman region, to feed silkworms; and he envisaged the diversion of the waters of the River Karaj for

[1] R. G. Watson, *A History of Persia*, London, 1866, p. 354.

Tehran's water-supply, which the Karaj waters do furnish today. His measures were in accord with an Iranian aristocrat's shrewd perception that the time had come for turning to personal enrichment the openings provided through new foreign contacts. The failure of Hajji Mirza Aghasi's countrymen to praise him for his enterprise was partly no doubt due to an equally shrewd appreciation on their part that new economic alignments emerging during his period as Prime Minister were not destined to enrich the people, but only to make a rapacious aristocracy more powerful, while the situation of the cultivator became little better than slavery.

Muhammad Shah died in the late summer of 1848. Once again the British and Russian representatives, at this time Colonel Farrant and Prince Dolgorouky respectively, were on the alert to prevent any major outbreak. The heir-apparent was in Tabriz, but the new Queen Mother showed firmness and promptitude in the palace at Tehran, while a group of notables, having first chosen to seek security for their deliberations in the British Legation, formed an interim council of regency. Nevertheless there were disturbances, both in the capital and at provincial centres. In the latter the local populations sought to take advantage of the situation to rid themselves of unwanted Provincial Governors. In the capital the riots were against the unpopular Mirza Aghasi. Two court factions, the so-called Azerbaijan Party and the adherents of the Asafu'd-Daulah, Allah Yar Khan, now in exile, united against Mirza Aghasi, joining in the general demand for his dismissal as the necessary prelude to a new reign. Mirza Aghasi barricaded himself with a private army in the Arg or citadel of Tehran but was soon forced to flee and during several difficult days the British and Russian Missions acted in concert to ensure the sixteen-year-old Shah's safe arrival on the throne. The young Shah finally reached Tehran under the capable aegis of Mirza Taqi Khan.

Mirza Taqi Khan, who on his master's arrival in Tehran received the title of Amir-i-Nizam, Commander-in-Chief, a title he preferred to that of Sadr-i-'Azam, was the son of a cook who had later become steward to the Qa'im Maqam. Contemporary foreign observers made much of this, referring to his 'plebeian' origins and so transferring western European social conceptions to Qajar Iran – a transference not confined to westerners' observations on that country but also influencing the minds of some of the Iranian élite, by this time open to foreign concepts by the journeys to Iran of foreigners and the journeys abroad of Iranians. But the contrast between classes is none the less basically alien to the Muslim-Persian social structure.

One of the characteristics of Muslim society was mobility. Particularly in the Shi'ite social ideal, it was not a man's birth that counted so much as his ability. A clever man could ascend to the highest degrees of the religious hierarchy, which were in fact generally filled by men of the people. A great measure of the influence of the clerics arose from this, for they could claim, and still do, close contact with the common people and that they were thus better able than others to gauge popular reactions.

Mirza Taqi Khan was not, however, a cleric; but in becoming the chief officer of the state from the kitchen he was not without exalted precedents in Persian dynastic and political history. If, as R. G. Watson suggests,[1] Persians like the Queen Mother were opposed to him because of his 'humble extraction', already by 1848 European ideas had penetrated certain Iranian minds to a surprising extent. What is more likely is that opposition to the Amir-i-Kabir, the Great Amir as Mirza Taqi Khan came to be called, was excited by his stern integrity and zeal for reform.

His political lineage is much more significant than his descent, although it might be expected that the son of a steward in a household run to the satisfaction of a man like the Qa'im Maqam would possess a shrewd sense of affairs. Mirza Taqi Khan had been the protégé of the Qa'im Maqam, whose work he attempted to continue. To do this he had to try to mould the mind of the autocrat who was his employer, so that he at least would support the minister's efforts. In the same way the Qa'im Maqam had shaped the mind of 'Abbas Mirza and tried to influence Muhammad Shah on 'Abbas Mirza's untimely death, though then he had made little headway. The fate of both these ministers demonstrates how difficult and dangerous striving to influence a Shah could be: neither did the Qa'im Maqam long outlive Muhammad Shah's accession, nor Mirza Taqi Khan that of Muhammad Shah's successor. Portentous was his initial incapacity to win the confidence of the Queen Mother and, as he was by no means the first vazir to suffer dismissal and death, so he was not the first to suffer through failure to obtain support of the harem. At the end of this book we shall see Iranian women permitted to sit in Parliament. Now they are allowed openly to play their part in politics, but they always wielded considerable power, even when strictly confined.

On Nasiru'd-Din Shah's accession, Mirza Aghasi was supplanted by Mirza Taqi Khan the Amir-i-Kabir, whereupon the Queen Mother became the rallying point for those members of the élite who, not wanting Mirza Aghasi at the head of affairs, desired the Amir-i-

[1] Op. cit., p. 370.

Kabir even less. The disturbed state of the country, however, at first allowed no one scope for action: everyone was too busy securing his own personal safety, and waiting on the outcome of events, for conspiracy to advance from whispers to action. It was convenient to leave the Amir-i-Kabir to re-establish a measure of stability before his downfall was contrived; let him first replenish the coffers of state. There would be time later to bring him down.

Mirza Taqi Khan found a serious deficit due to the Mirza Aghasi's irresponsible dispensations of grants to undeserving hangers-on – his distribution of *barāts*, demands for the payment of pensions and rewards to various people, addressed to provincial tax authorities and chargeable on local revenues. Many of these drafts had not been honoured. In some instances the Mirza Aghasi probably never intended that they should be; issuing them was a way of silencing the importunate. Thus, in addition to an empty treasury, the new minister found the throne encumbered with debts. As one of his main objectives was the preservation and enhancement of the Shah's prestige, he strove to satisfy all the creditors. Somehow at the same time he had to finance the suppression of rebellion in the province of Khurasan. There the son of Allah Yar Khan was conducting a full-scale war against the central Government. Allah Yar Khan, the Asafu'd-Daulah and he whom we have met in connection with the Griboedov scandal, had been made Governor of that rich province. He had sought to have his partner in the affairs of Khurasan removed because in effect in the governorship of Khurasan the system provided for the provincial governor to be watched by another great official, the Nayibu't-Tauliyyah, a layman entrusted by the Shah with the guardianship and the administration of the large revenues of the shrine at Meshed, the provincial capital. This office is still highly prized and still in the Shah's personal gift. Allah Yar Khan tried to acquire it for a member of his own family, thus to gain virtually sole charge of the province and become independent of the capital. His attempt resulted in Muhammad Shah sending him into exile, but his son rebelled against Muhammad Shah's successor and presented Mirza Taqi Khan with one of his most difficult and expensive initial tasks.

Khuraşan was ultimately brought back into the fold, but it continued to be extremely distracted, chiefly because of the boldness of Turkoman raiders across the northern borders. Rebellion in Khurasan had given them an opportunity, not only for taking sides with the rebels, but also for raiding, sometimes as far south as the neighbourhood of Isfahan. The raiders carried off cattle and kidnapped men and women, who were sold into slavery in the market of Khiva.

When Nasiru'd-Din Shah sent an embassy to protest against this traffic to the Khan of Khiva, the Khan said that as they were Sunnites his people and those of the other Central Asian Khanates considered it legal to possess Persian Shi'ites as slaves, whom they employed as cultivators. It was only the Russian pacification of the border between Turkistan and Persia in the 1880's that put an end to this scourge. In the preceding years it had reached such a pitch that Nasiru'd-Din Shah himself had been unable safely to make the journey from Tehran to Meshed.

The Amir-i-Kabir continued the Qa'im Maqam's efforts to clarify the official language. Among other things he reduced the number of honorifics with which it was customary to address people in the beautifully, and artfully, worded and inscribed communications of those days. Thus the Minister's work forms part of the history of the development of modern Persian literature as well as of modern Iran. Had he survived to carry his reforms further, a measure of modernisation would almost certainly have been achieved earlier, and on firmer foundations, than it was. He had been at the meetings of the mixed frontier commission convened in 1842 to study Irano-Turkish border problems and had been for some time in the Turkish city of Erzerum, where he had heard of the reforms of the *tanzimat* in Turkey, among the very first attempts at systematic modernisation of a Muslim state. Also Mirza Taqi Khan had travelled to St. Petersburg with Prince Khusrau, in the special embassy sent from Iran to express regret for the murder of Griboedov. This visit had early impressed upon his mind Iran's need for reform; while the movement in Turkey had shown him that reform of an Oriental and Islamic government was within the bounds of possibility.

We have noticed some of the less attractive consequences of increased contact with foreign nations. The results of new relations with the outside world, however, were not entirely unbeneficial. A very important result of these new relationships was the mental awakening which they engendered. For example the Government of India began recruiting Iranians to teach its British officers a pronunciation of Persian which would be less offensive to Iranian ears than the one they learnt from Indian teachers. The Indian *munshi*, as local teachers of the Indian and Persian languages were called, taught a pronunciation of Persian somewhat analogous to the English spoken in Boston as compared with the standard English of England. The trade between southern Iran and India was increasing and young Iranians, mostly the sons of merchants or of noblemen in the southern provinces of the country, were being sent to India for advanced education. Thus an intellectual and commercial relation-

ship between one great oriental territory under western rule and Iran, which had for many years been almost completely sealed off from the rest of the world, was now flourishing. It was relationships of this kind which were to hasten Iran's 'Awakening'. In the course of the nineteenth century Iranian merchants began to move all over the Near East as well as visiting India, and they were men of quick discernment and men of culture and patriotism. The lessons they gained from familiarity with cities like Istanboul, Tiflis, Baku, Batum, Odessa, Cairo, Bombay and Calcutta were to have a profound effect on events in their homeland.

Mirza Taqi Khan was the merchants' friend. He built the great bazaar at Tehran and encouraged a rising mercantile class which differed from the élite in that its influence rested on individual honesty, a correct appraisal of world events and well-filled cash-boxes; not on inherited privileges and the fruits of extortion; intriguing round a small and ignorant court; dissimulation and treachery. By the time Mirza Taqi Khan relinquished office, there were three potentially active political and social classes in Iran: an aristocracy of ignorant but tenacious nobles; the merchants with international contacts and increased wealth due to revived foreign trade; and the clergy. Above all these was the throne, and the court which revolved round it. Mirza Taqi Khan had succeeded in forming some semblance of an army and, which is more important, making sure that the soldiers were paid. He had reduced rebellion and strengthened the Crown. The tribes were, therefore, reasonably quiescent; they only became restless in times of trouble.

The chief source of restlessness that manifested itself at the time of Mirza Taqi Khan's fall from power was the religious classes. Mirza Taqi Khan first and foremost showed himself opposed to any circumstance that might damage the prestige of the throne. In accordance with this policy he had brooked no interference in political affairs from the clergy. Not only had he regarded clerical interference with suspicion, but he had also striven to diminish the influence of the foreign legations, particularly the Russian and the British. These legations had come to be regarded by some Persian dignitaries as legitimate places of refuge and while some people preferred the Russian others preferred the British, depending upon which way their sympathies lay or which of the two powers they thought would best serve their interests. The Amir-i-Kabir was careful to make it clear that this kind of reliance on foreigners was unpatriotic and that encouragement of it by foreigners constituted an insult to his country's sovereignty and would not be tolerated. He attempted to make resorting to foreigners an unfashionable practice

and, so far as he was able, withstood the demands of the two great powers. Admittedly he gave way to the Russians on the question of their having a naval base on the island of Ashurada in the south-eastern corner of the Caspian Sea and very close to Iranian territory, but in this prudence was certainly uppermost: the minister's motive was not so much a desire to avoid exciting Russian anger as the desire to free the Caspian coast of Turkoman pirates. This Russian ships could achieve to the benefit of merchant shipping generally and the trade of Iran's northern provinces.

Before returning to his policy towards the religious classes, it is necessary to note that he was not only faced with potential interference from the orthodox religious, but also found himself confronted by heresy in the form of the religious movement known as Babism. Babism may be taken as a sign that the mercantile class and some of the religious classes associated with merchants were aware of the necessity for taking the matter of reform and modernisation into their own hands. The Persian religious classes, as might be expected, included a number of men of great intelligence. Not surprisingly, these men were sensitively attuned to the desire for change and to the preparations for meeting the modern world on its own terms which were very much in the minds of some of their compatriots, especially those who travelled abroad. The capacity to sense a situation quickly, assessing shifts in outlook and trimming sails accordingly, is not less a feature of Iranian clerics than it is of the nation as a whole. After the deaths of Nadir Shah and Karim Khan the Zand, the situation had become extremely confused and in many parts of the country the people were subjected to great hardship and privation. As William Francklin[1] and George Foster[2] both demonstrate, the Iranian people in those troubled times turned to religion, with the sad result that the mullas were able to use their influence to produce a fanatical attitude among the masses: an attitude basically alien to the Persian character, although less so to the Turkish.

Mirza Taqi Khan's secularism reduced the scope of the religious classes' influence but left them in search of some diversion whereby they could again make their presence felt. Babism was just such a diversion. Babism began in Fars, the southern province with its capital at Shiraz, in the year 1844. The new religion's founder was Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad, who was born in 1819 in Shiraz of a merchant family. For our purposes, the following elements may

[1] William Francklin, *Observations made on a Tour from Bengal to Persia in the Years 1784–7*, London, 1790.

[2] George Foster, *A Journey from Bengal to England* (in 1783), London, 1798.

be noted among those which formed the basis of the Babi movement.

First, there was an element, in the movement's origin, of the protest of the south against the north: a protest articulated by merchants who were prospering from trade through Shiraz and its port of Bushire, and through the cities of Yazd and Kirman with their port of Bandar 'Abbas, with both the Indian sub-continent and Mesopotamia; the latter being served by the port of Basra, for southern Persian merchants the key to the Levant.

Second, there was the protest of an awakened and intelligent community against an apparently inert, excessively conservative orthodox religious class which accepted subordination to the dictates of the central government situated at a sufficiently remote distance in Tehran, and which thus represented a power the south felt no particular sympathy for, but rather, with those memories in Shiraz and Kirman of Agha Muhammad Khan's atrocities still fresh, the contrary. As an example of the recent alignment of the religious classes, when in Isfahan on Muhammad Shah's death the people had rebelled against the governor, the Imam Jum'a of the city – the most important religious dignitary – had sided with the government against the people.

Third, the Babi movement reflected a response to the advancing and menacing outside world, against which Iran could not contend on the material plane, but against which a spiritual regeneration and some new religious assertion might prevail. In other words, Iran lacked guns and ships such as the powers of the West possessed so formidably, but religious genius and theological subtlety were certainly part of Iran's inheritance. Instead of being completely overawed by the foreigners, here to hand were peculiarly Iranian advantages, ready for use in the resuscitation of the nation and as a means of quelling defeatism and despair. Despair in the people might in the early days of the movement be expressed and to some extent assuaged by the dismissal of this world and its institutions as no longer valid once the new dispensation had been revealed; but ultimately this new dispensation was to conquer the world. This was a form of spiritual conquest Iran could still arrogate to itself while materially her people were already confronted by defeat and ignominy at the hands of materially more advanced nations.

However, before Babism began to embark on its mission as a world faith, its chief preoccupation was at home. As just suggested the south of Iran had never been entirely in accord with the north, and the Qajars had not imitated the example of Shah 'Abbas the Safavid in making Isfahan, the half-way point between north and south,

their capital. By the middle of the nineteenth century Tehran was in some respects less close to Shiraz and Yazd and Kirman than were Bombay and Basrah. Yet Tehran controlled cities like Shiraz and Yazd through the governors and tax-gatherers which Tehran appointed and whose presence in the south could not be expected to endear the distant capital to the hearts of the Yazdis or Shirazis. Shiraz was a natural centre for the emergence of a new movement and it was there that Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad declared himself as the Bab or Gate of the Shi'ite tradition, the man who could announce the Coming of the Mehdi. He went further than this, passing beyond established tradition, for he claimed that he had come to inaugurate a new tradition which made all earlier teachings noxious and nugatory.

Yazd soon also became the scene of a serious and Babi-inspired revolt; next, Kirman was chosen as a centre for the new propaganda. The Shah possessed that knack which certainly rulers of Iran need, for scenting danger from quasi-esoteric movements. The Babi movement was outlawed and fulminated against from the pulpits of the mosques, but only to flourish under persecution and to become a vendetta against the Shah. Its aims were to effect the spiritual and moral regeneration of mankind and to achieve, in world political unity, the halting of world conflicts. Aims of this kind assured the movement considerable appeal to a growing number of adherents among enlightened people. The masses of the people were not much affected. It was the middle and educated classes, merchants and the younger generation who were the most attracted; but those who joined the movement included intellectuals whose intellectual awakening had not yet displaced a traditional concern for the state of the soul. Equality of the sexes, world political and legal organisation, encouragement of education regardless of class, were the kind of objectives the new movement later established for itself, but, though in the course of its development Babism, and its offshoot Bahaism, became a world faith, which attempted a synthesis of the best elements in other great religions and adopted a stand against the exclusiveness and negative pride of Muslim clericalism, in its origins and initial appeal it was a Messianic cult with roots deep in the whole complex of Iranian spirituality.

The roots of this millennialist anticipation and aspiration may be considered implicit in the dualist religious and originally entirely Iranian resolution of the problem of evil, in which Ahriman, the evil force, is ultimately defeated and destroyed by the power of goodness. Without himself going into details, Ahmad Kasravi, in

his pamphlet on Bahaism[1] asserts that anciently 'Iranians believed in Ahriman and ascribed to him the world's evils, believing that a day would come when someone of the race of Zoroaster named Sāyūshīyānt [*sic*] would appear and, having slain Ahriman, empty the world of all evil.' He links the Iranians and the Jews as having belief in a Messiah in common and ascribes this belief's strength to the sufferings and oppressions endured by these two peoples at various times in their respective histories. He then discusses the injection of the Messiah belief into Islam, a religion within which it initially had no place. The belief in a saviour was, he explains, added to Islamic theory by Iranians; certainly by non-Arab converts to Islam in the eighth century, most of whom were Iranian, the movement taking its rise round the personality of a man named al-Mukhtar at Kufa in the southern Euphrates region of Mesopotamia where a number of Iranians were active. It was there that the doctrine was promulgated of the 'Concealment' of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiya, one of 'Ali's sons, and of his not having died, only disappeared someday to return.

Expectations of the concealed Mehdi's manifestation, to lead forth armies of the righteous and put right the affairs of the world, is one of the principal tenets of even the moderate Shi'itism recognised officially in Iran; but during the reign of Fath 'Ali Shah a dissenting Shi'ite theologian of Persia named Shaikh Ahmad Ahsa'i carried the theory of the Mahdi and of the Emamate, that is to say, of the system of divinely inspired leadership by Emams descended from 'Ali, a stage further. He preached that the Emams are collectively the sole surrogate upon earth for God on high and that it is through them that the world is sustained, as it was created through their having been created first before all else.

A great deal of Shaikh Ahsa'i's teachings represented an attempt to bring into a philosophical system the popular belief in and craving for the appearance of the 'Hidden Emam'. Shi'ism had become the established religion of Iran, as we have seen, under the Safavids, but since their fall the country had been subjected to a variety of stresses and was, by the time of Shaikh Ahsa'i, also already beginning to feel the effects of foreign pressures and influences. The restlessness and dissatisfaction of the people, to which allusion has already been made, had for a considerable period been evinced to an increasing degree by public and private prayers for the Hidden Emam's return. In the history of what may be called Emamism in the Near East this was not new; there had centuries before been times when parties of

[1] *Bahā'īgarī*, in Persian, Tehran undated but probably written in the early 1940's.

people went daily to the spot whence the Emam was expected to reappear and where they beat drums and cried out for him. But when Shaikh Ahsa'i began his new teaching, the act of praying for the Mehdi and bewailing his non-appearance was claiming a startling proportion of the people's attention. Kasravi describes how, 'Up to the Constitutional Movement, the people of Iran's sole source of hope was the Hidden Emam: only through his Appearance did they expect future happiness, the country's salvation from misfortune and so on. Everyday they cried . . . 'Peace be upon Thee, O Lord of the Age', and with wailing and lamentation was his early coming sought.' These are things, Kasravi adds, 'that went on until our own time and we remember them well.'[1]

Shaikh Ahsa'i called himself the Gate, *Bāb*, for the Hidden Emam and in his vigorous revival of this aspect of Shi'ite Islam, his revival of Emamism, he seems at times to have gone even further. His and his disciples' voluminous writings gave a fillip to religious thought in general. New theories were widely discussed, while the disputations between the Shaikh's followers and those opposed to him conferred on religious controversy and speculation a fresh vitality; albeit what chiefly emerged was a plethora of fine-spun theorising in the worst kind of scholastic tradition and of a nature that makes one question the sanity and seek some social and historical explanation for the fantasies of its exponents.

When Shaikh Ahmad of Ahsa died in 1826, his cause was carried on by two leaders of whom the most influential was Sayyid Kazim of Rasht. On this Sayyid's death in 1843 he left no clear indication about who should be regarded as his successor; instead he hinted that the time of the Emam's Appearance was not far distant. After Sayyid Kazim's death three separate calls developed out of the original Shaikhi movement. One was that of Hajji (the title *Hajji* means that its holder had performed the Pilgrimage to Mecca) Karim Khan at Kerman and Hajji Karim Khan's descendants still enjoy rank, wealth and veneration as religious notabilities in the city of Kirman, where they have the title, Sirkar Agha. Another was the movement of Hajji Mirza Shafi' of Tabriz, whose followers were termed 'Shaikhi' to distinguish them from their rivals in Kirman, the 'Karim Khanis', who also had agents in Tabriz. Thirdly there was the Babi movement itself, which was initially promoted by one Mulla Husain of Bushruyah round the saintly young Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali of Shiraz, and the prime motivation of which may be attributed to Sayyid Kazim's prognostication about the early manifestation of the Hidden Emam. For though Sayyid Muhammad

[1] Ahmad Kasravi, op cit., p. 16.

'Ali only declared himself the Gate or Bāb for the Appearance, it seems evident that when he found the youthful Sayyid in Shiraz Mulla Husain was on a quest to discover the man who might be the vehicle for the Emam's return among men.

In addition to these three groups, Tabriz saw the rise of a counter movement in the *Mutasharri'yun*, those who saw the Shaikhis etc. as deviators from orthodox Shi'ite theology. Tabriz became a centre of vigorous religious arguments and sporadic outbursts of religious factionalism. It was there that the then Crown Prince, who was Governor of Azerbaijan and later, as Nasiru'd-Din, the Shah of Persia, had the Bab, Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali, fetched from a fortress on the Turkish border where he was being kept prisoner and, in September 1848, subjected to the ordeal of a religious debate with prominent divines. Nasiru'd-Din's report of these proceedings to his father, Muhammad Shah, still exists and from it we learn that the Sayyid's theology was extremely faulty, that all he would say was 'I do not know' or 'I cannot say', and that when he ventured to utter a string of pious clichés and spiritual ejaculations, his incorrect Arabic grammar – for he said these things in the language of theology, Arabic – brought scorn and laughter from his interlocutors. In the end they had him beaten and he wrote, in, it must be confessed, the most exquisite handwriting, whatever the state of his Arabic grammar might have been, a kind of, but by no means complete recantation. He said that he was only the humblest of God's servants and that he had never claimed supernatural powers.

Nevertheless it was not long before the poor Sayyid, still not thirty years of age, suffered death for his mission in the manner shortly to be described; but the point needs emphasising that the mission had probably been chiefly foisted upon him by men who believed it *their* mission to find either the Emam in human guise or the Bab who should herald his coming. Thus a man of the calibre of Mulla Husain of Bushruyah, who made the Babi movement a militant and politically dangerous one extending all over Iran, lighted upon the Sayyid in Shiraz and, after being closeted alone with him for three days, apparently convinced him that he was somebody special. By the time the Bab was executed in 1850 the movement had attained such dimensions that the emissary sent from Tehran to supervise his execution was careful to have the captive sent round to the chief divines of Tabriz for *fatwas*, decrees, to be obtained sanctioning his death; and, incidentally, it seems that only three such sanctioning decrees were in the end issued. But before describing the Bab's death a reference will have to be made to what had been happening between 1845 and 1850, during the last two

years of which period the Bab himself had been in prison and not active.

Babism announced its secession from Islam at the convention of Behdasht in 1848. Thereafter the movement assumed a distinctly militant policy, which resulted in increased persecution. The Bab had been imprisoned in the north, near Tabriz, as a result of Mirza Aghasi's letter to the religious dignitaries of Isfahan, on 1st January 1847, charging the Bab with laying claim to prophethood and, interestingly enough commenting that most of 'these Shaikhis' were addicted to the use of Indian hemp or *Bang*, and that their acts and pretensions were the product of intoxication from these drugs. Then, in the spring of 1850, a renegade Muslim cleric who had turned Babi led a band of his brethren in rebellion in the city of Zanjan. Zanjan is not a very large city, but it is situated in a rich agricultural region and on the main road from Tabriz to Tehran, nearer the former. With extraordinary courage and resource the insurgents for nearly a year withstood attempts by the Shah's army to reduce them. Eventually their leader was killed and they lost heart and surrendered. It was during the insurrection that the Bab was brought from his prison to Tabriz and placed before a firing squad. A party of Christians was engaged to shoot him and any claims to supernatural powers that he may have made seemed to have been vindicated when, after the firing squad's first volley, he was found, not dead but to have vanished. The bullets had severed the cords by which he was suspended from a wall and had left him unscathed. He ran away under cover of the smoke from the volley. Unfortunately he ran into the Guard Room and was immediately recaptured and dispatched.

The Amir-i-Kabir might feel gratified that one piece of Babi perfidy had been, not without difficulty, eradicated at Zanjan, but then he was faced with troubles from orthodox religious quarters. Not wishing the Babis to have the monopoly in miracles, the orthodox clerics of Tabriz concocted miraculous-seeming events in one of the city's mosques. A cow that was being led to slaughter twice ran into the mosque. Its drover on trying to prevent it doing this a third time dropped down dead. This was ascribed to divine intervention on behalf of the cow and the mosque soon acquired a reputation for other virtues such as healing. The city was illuminated and there was great excitement. Few things are more effective in boosting religion among the simple than a miracle or two: the mullas gained great prestige among the people of Tabriz as a result of these stories, but Mirza Taqi Khan was not the man quietly to watch one of the most important and prosperous cities in the empire fall entirely under

religious influence. He ordered an Afsharid tribal chief to enter Tabriz with an army and forcibly kidnap the Shaikh al-Islam, the leading religious personality.

Thus we see Mirza Taqi Khan on the one hand ridding himself of the leader of a heterodox religious movement, and on the other dealing a blow to orthodox religious influence in one of the country's principal provincial centres.

Mirza Taqi Khan the Amir-i-Kabir was dismissed in November 1851; his death followed a year later. Then he was dragged from the side of his wife, the Shah's only sister, who remained devoted to him to the very end, and taken into a bath in the Palace of Fin at Kashan, where the pair had been kept as prisoners. In the bath the great Minister's veins were opened so that he bled to death before his wife could realise what had happened to him. Ironically, the attempts made by the Russian minister to save the Amir probably precipitated his execution. The Shah and his councillors were alarmed by the Russian protests for they thought that an order to spare the great Amir's life might ultimately come from the Tsar himself. They therefore decided to make away with Mirza Taqi Khan before such an embarrassing diplomatic situation arose. The British did not repeat the rather clumsy efforts of Prince Dolgorouky to save the Minister. It is perhaps on account of this tactful behaviour that the British have, for some otherwise inexplicable reason, often been charged by Iranians with having had a hand in the Amir's fall and subsequent death. Yet contemporary English observers expressed the greatest admiration for the Amir-i-Kabir and regarded him as one of the greatest statesmen Iran had ever had or was ever likely to have. These observers were prone, correctly as events showed, to see in his death the suspension of any improvement in the conditions of the country.

Chapter 5

Nasiru'd-Din Shah on his Own

In 1852 the King was slightly wounded by a bullet fired at him while out hunting in the neighbourhood of Tehran. Three men were arrested and tortured in an effort to establish who directed this attack on the Shah's life. All that could be discovered was that they belonged to the Babi sect and consequently the signal was given for the interrogation and ultimately execution of those Babi leaders who were at the time in prison in the capital. These leaders were eventually brought into the bazaar of the city and slowly done to death in the manner described by an Austrian officer in the Shah's service who was so disgusted by what he saw that he resigned; his own words, from a letter written at Tehran in August 1852, give the story of an extraordinary outburst of cruelty and hysteria only paralleled in the nineteenth century history of Persia by the episode of Griboedov's murder and the massacre of the Russian mission twenty-three years before. Captain von Goumoens wrote that the first leader of the Babis, the Bab himself, had 'pointed out to the disciples of his teaching that the way to Paradise lay through the torture-chamber. If he spoke truly, then the present Shah has deserved great merit, for he strenuously endeavours to people all the realms of the Saints with Babis! His last edict still further enjoins on the royal servants the annihilation of the sect. If these simply followed the Royal command and rendered harmless such of the fanatics as are arrested, by inflicting on them a swift and lawful death, one must needs, from the Oriental standpoint, approve of this; but the manner of inflicting the sentence, the circumstances which precede the end, the agonies which consume the bodies of the victims until their life is extinguished in the last convulsion are so horrible that the blood curdles in my veins if I now endeavour to depict the scene for you, even in outline. Innumerable blows with sticks which fall heavily on the back and soles of the feet, brandings of different parts of the body with red-hot irons, are such usual inflictions that the victim who undergoes only such caresses is to be accounted fortunate. But follow me my friend, you who lay claim to a heart and European ethics, follow me to the unhappy ones who, with gouged-out eyes, must eat,

on the scene of the deed, without any sauce, their own amputated ears; or whose teeth are torn out with inhuman violence by the hand of the executioner; or whose bare skulls are simply crushed by blows from a hammer; or where the *bāzār* is illuminated with unhappy victims, because on right and left the people dig deep holes in their breasts and shoulders and insert burning wicks in the wounds. I saw some dragged in chains through the *bāzār*, preceded by a military band, in whom these wicks had burned so deep that now the fat flickered convulsively in the wound like a newly extinguished lamp.

'Not seldom it happens that the unwearying ingenuity of the Orientals leads to fresh tortures. They will skin the soles of the Bābī's feet, soak the wounds in boiling oil, shoe the foot like the hoof of a horse, and compel the victim to run. No cry escaped from the victim's breast; the torment is endured in dark silence by the numbed sensation of the fanatic; now he must run; the body cannot endure what the soul has endured; he falls! Give him the *coup de grace*! Put him out of his pain! No! The executioner swings the whip, and – I myself have had to witness it – the unhappy victim of hundred-fold tortures runs! This is the beginning of the end. As for the end itself, they hang the scorched and perforated bodies by their hands and feet to a tree head-downwards, and now every Persian may try his marksmanship to his heart's content. . . . I saw corpses torn by nearly 150 bullets. . . . Not only the executioner and the common people took part in this massacre: sometimes Justice would present some of the unhappy Bābīs to various dignitaries, and the Persian (recipient) would be well content, deeming it an honour to imbrue his own hands in the blood of the pinioned and defenceless victim. Infantry, cavalry, artillery, the *ghulāms* or guards of the King, and the guilds of butchers, bakers etc., all took their fair share in these bloody deeds.'[1]

There we can leave the Austrian officer's letter, recalling ruefully that in 1952 it would have been less easy to draw an odious comparison between 'European ethics' and 'the unwearying ingenuity of the Oriental' in devising fresh tortures. One of the most interesting points which emerges from his narrative is how people of all ranks dipped their hands in the blood of the martyrs, a fact attested from other sources. Although the Austrian's account must be recognised as that of a man brought up in a very different tradition to the one then prevailing in Nasiru'd-Din Shah's Persia, and the document of a person obviously not anxious to admit any extenuating circumstances in the case he was describing, there is no reason to doubt its accuracy,

[1] Cited from Edward G. Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Bābī Religion*, Cambridge, 1918, pp. 268–270.

however emotive its tone. Indeed Iranians commenting on this singular episode in the recent history of their country have generally remarked on the wide-scale audience-participation, as it were, which was a feature of that frightful day in 1852. It is said that, not to be thought dilatory in demonstrating loyalty to their injured sovereign, Ministers and their minions rushed to the scene of execution in order to stain their hands with the victims' blood. The Austrian reports that one Babi actually fell 'to the share of the *Imam-Jum'a*, who put him to death'.

This kind of action can be accounted for in two ways: the division of responsibility for the holocaust entailed by the participation in it of numerous people, so that it could never be laid at the door of one man; and the fact already alluded to, of wishing to prove devotion to the man whose attempted assassination afforded the pretext for it; there would also be the factor of nobody's daring not to conform to the dictates of mass hysteria—the *Imam Jum'a* may not have liked doing what the pressure of the moment forced upon him. But there must have been more to it than this: Iranian commentators, their comment coloured by an instinctual understanding of their country's history through ages before 1852 and by pessimism about its state in subsequent times, draw attention, perhaps superfluously, to the fact that such cruelties were symptoms of a terrible degree of national frustration and desperation.

An outlet for the nation's sorrows has, until very recent years, been provided by the annual mourning ceremonies commemorating the death of Husain and his family, massacred on the 10th of the Arabic month of Muharram in the 61st year of the Muslim era, the 10th October A.D. 680. Husain was the son of 'Ali by the Prophet Muhammad's daughter, Fatima. He is reputed to have been the object of his maternal grandfather's special affection. On his father's death and after Hasan, his brother's, he became head of the Shi'a Shortly afterwards he was surrounded by the soldiers of the rival, Umayyad Caliph, Yazid I, and slain with all his people. Subsequently the spot where this event took place, on the site of Kerbela in Iraq a few miles to the west of the River Euphrates, became a centre of pilgrimage for Shi'ite Muslims, by whom the first ten days of the month of Muharram are observed as a period of yearly mourning.

Although discouraged under the secularising policy of the late Reza Shah, and again today under his son, these mourning rituals were for a long time a prominent feature of the Persian religious calendar. Each evening preachers used to fill black-draped tented arenas with audiences from whose eyes they wrung tears with

sermons, chanted in accordance with established formulae, describing the massacre. These sermons were a kind of verbal preview of the mystery plays performed on the tenth day. Then the massacre was re-enacted with such passionate realism that sometimes counterfeit death became that which could not be undone, while the unfortunates cast in the roles of the murdering Umayyad general, Shimr, his immediate commander, 'Umar ibn Sa'd, and the rival Caliph, Yazid, not rarely courted disaster at the hands of the crowd. The participation of the audience in the grief engendered by these sermons and performances was intense, the emotion aroused infectious. Another form of demonstration which marked these days were processions of flagellants through the streets, drawing blood from their own breasts and chests with many-thonged, spiked whips of chain and thumping the skin off their flesh with pummelling fists as they walked, repeating the names of the Shi'ite martyrs in unison, marching and beating themselves in unbroken rhythm.

The passion-plays, called *ta'ziyas*, present several features of interest to the mythologist. One such item is the appearance of the Christian Prior, who pronounces the Muslim confession of faith before the head of the martyred Husain when it is being carried in dolorous procession to the wicked Yazid in Damascus. There a Frankish Ambassador, likewise representing a different faith and dressed in an alien garb, intercedes with the Caliph to ensure the head's proper burial, and a lion pays homage to it. In the roles of the Ambassador and the Prior, the mythologist may wish to see parallels to the role of the 'Doctor' in certain European re-enactments of the death and resurrection of the Vegetation Diety; or the Spirit of the Year of old Russia. The analogy may seem far-fetched, but it is worth bearing in mind; it conveys some sense of how, like old European folk rituals, these *ta'ziyas* answered a popular emotional need. They were in some sort an annual festival of sorrow, with the difference that in Iran a kind of deep, ineradicable pessimism overclouded them, prohibiting the sudden transition from grief to the joy of rebirth and resurrection characteristic of their European counterparts. It is in their function of affording an annual release of universal grief, a flowing of tears, a passionate tearing of the flesh and buffeting of the body to express contempt for the vileness of our depraved human state, that these maudlin incidents are being looked at here. Here, too, they are to be seen in the context of that extra though much more sinister 'Muharram' outburst of 1852, when a whole city participated in the mutilation of the living flesh of the silent or simply hymn-singing Babis. For the slaying of the Babis gives evidence, additional to the regular Muharram ceremonies, of how a nation's

accumulated sense of grievance can suddenly manifest itself in an orgy of blood. Contrary to the general temper of the time, the Amir-i-Kabir had discouraged such scenes. Had he been alive it is probable that he would have been equally averse to the scenes which occurred after the attempt on Nasiru'd-Din-Shah's life. As it was, the Tehran tumult of 1852 provided dismal proof of how wretched the nation was becoming at the time of the great reformer's death.

Western observers, kept informed through the publication in Europe of letters like the Austrian's, were deeply shocked by the victimisation of the Babis, both at the time and later, when Iran was exciting greater interest in the West than in 1852. Already, in the middle of the century, the incident in Tehran soon became news. to be a topic of conversation in Vienna and London. Already to this extent contact with the outside world had destroyed the nation's privacy. It was not long before the expansion of Europe brought to Iran the pressure of Europe's assumed right to judge and criticise the acts, the follies, the angers, the inadequacies, the humiliations, the cruelties of 'the Oriental'.

The unflinching courage of the Babis, those sacrificial victims in a moment of Persian despair, and the fact that among them was a woman, a poetess moreover, called Qur'atu'l-'Ain, gave their tragedy an appeal the more stirring to liberal sympathisers in Europe. This was especially so because Babism and later its offshoot, Bahaism, presented the novelty of a new religion, complete with a Prophet and a Prophecy, from a land traditionally the home of spiritual force and religious innovation, at a time when many in Europe were suffering disenchantment with their own established faith and becoming increasingly imbued with ideas of social progress and enlightenment. Not having yet, however, accepted the view that societies might be reformed without the adjunct of religious reform, the idea of a religious movement against conservative orthodoxy and coupled with a programme of social reform was extremely attractive; few things can be more seductive in the transmission of influence and ideas than the feeling that the conduct of others is due to dissatisfaction similar to one's own and therefore, though at a dangerously superficial level, seemingly more easily understandable and deserving of sympathy. The Babi movement was seen as an attempt to break out of the backwoods of rigid Muslim orthodoxy and ensure a new enlightenment, rather on modern European lines, under the aegis of a new religious teaching. An advance was made from the original Babi position when the first Bab, who merely claimed to be the Gate for the coming of one greater than he, was succeeded by Baha'ullah, who declared himself the one 'whom God

shall manifest'. This declaration was not made in Iran but in exile in 1863. It meant that in effect Baha'ullah was the expected incarnation of divine power; Bahaism was entering on its mission as a world faith. Baha'ullah died in Palestine in 1892 and during practically thirty years of separation from Iran, the country of the Babis' and Baha'is' origin, the sect had had plenty of time, and plenty of compulsion, to develop a world mission.

The course of Babism became difficult after the death of the Bab because of a split among his followers. Some supported Baha'ullah, the chosen successor; others preferred his brother, Mirza Yahya Nuri, designated the Subh-i-Azal, Morning of Eternity. The Subh-i-Azal's adherents were in the minority and it is as Bahaism that the Babi teachings have become most widely known internationally. So far as Iranian history of the mid-nineteenth century is concerned, mention of the two brothers who followed the first leader, Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad the Bab, has significance apart from their religious enterprise. These two men were from the North of Iran, from the province of Mazandaran, whereas it will be recalled that the original Babi movement had begun in the South. They were of courtier, land-owning stock, whereas it will be remembered that the founders of the faith had generally speaking been of the merchant and mulla classes. Thus they show the introduction of a fresh element into the movement. Few of their own class followed their example. Nevertheless the fact that they set it at all shows how the Babi propaganda had spread over the whole country and indicates the possibility that it could attract a wide variety of social types to its teaching and ultimately against the established order. Nasiru'd-Din Shah's stern commands after the attempt on his life were clearly neither entirely accidental nor lacking in foresight. Drastic action was considered necessary.

Among the Europeans who became interested in the movement notable were the French Comte de Gobineau and the British Professor E. G. Browne.[1] E. G. Browne, who became a Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, was keenly interested in the Persian language and literature and, though his initial enthusiasm for the Babi-Baha'i movement appears later to have somewhat cooled, in it he was doubtless as much motivated by personal liberal sympathies as by his excitement on discovering that an ancient seat of religious speculation like Iran could in modern times give proof of continuing religious genius.

[1] See particularly, de Gobineau, *Les Religions et Les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*, Paris, 1865, E. G. Brown, op. cit., and *A Year Amongst the Persians*, Cambridge, 1927.

Such men were moved by the courage of the Babis under persecution. For their part the Babis must have been profoundly interested in the amount of foreign sympathy they so soon began to attract to themselves, if not to their tenets. After all, they were Persians: no Iranian would forget that men like de Gobineau or a professor in a famous British University belonged to nations capable of influencing Iranian Shahs and governments. In these religious ferments' political aspects, in so far as they were in conflict with the Iranian Government, expressions of liberal and spiritual sympathy from eminent Europeans were useful. Whether, as in the case of Browne, the views of those foreigners were often at variance with the official policies of their own governments made no difference: Iranians when impelled to seek strength through the approbation or merely the benign interest of influential foreigners do not draw too fine a distinction between what the individual says and what his government's policy is. It is enough to have discovered a point of reference abroad; a source of strength to allude to and with which to impress people.

Browne's later change of heart towards Bahaism might be ascribed to the rise after 1905 of the Iranian Constitutional Movement, one of his major preoccupations. Then the social and political reform of Iran had passed into hands which, where they were religious were orthodox, and where they were secular, bordered on the anti-religious and agnostic. In other words, by 1905 it had become obvious that Iran's regeneration was not to be the task and the glory of heterodox religious sectarianism, but rather, of politicians in conjunction with divines who played, not at presenting the world with a new kind of religion, but at being politicians. The Babis in Iran in the eighteen fifties had, as events later showed, acted too precipitately. They had arisen, with the support of sundry people of greater enlightenment than their compatriots and more experience of countries better organised than Iran, to express dissatisfaction with the established religious and political institutions; but they had been premature. So had the Amir-i-Kabir: 1852 saw the end of his attempts to regenerate Iran and also saw the end of the Babis as a body that might ultimately have undertaken Iran's reform. In effect all that the Babis achieved was the awakening of certain elements of the orthodox religious classes, for whom, no less than the Amir-i-Kabir himself had, Babism acted as a warning.

This is to anticipate developments which were not to take place for another three decades after 1852. On the dismissal of the Amir-i-Kabir, affairs deteriorated until early within the next century revolution came to arrest and temporarily reverse the down-hill trend. In studying the build-up to revolution, the situation in 1852 is inter-

esting because then both a significant rift and a significant challenge became manifest. The rift was in the breakdown of sympathy between the throne and influential sections of the community such as the Babis, or those who were secretly attracted towards them. The challenge was that which confronted the clergy, first in the Amir-i-Kabir's erastianism, second, in the Babi movement. The latter had threatened to cut Iranian society into opposing ideological groups. Its rigorous suppression prevented any such plain and dramatic development; but nonetheless the throne had been overtly threatened, for the first time in many years, and a strong leavening of progressively minded people had already made up their minds about the Shah. His prestige was damaged: the potency of the Crown's charismatic essence reduced. Meanwhile Nasiru'd-Din Shah had dismissed and connived in the execution of the wisest man in his Empire, who had been his Chief Minister. Thus early in his reign the young King set in train the process of his own increasing isolation and ineffectiveness. His rule was no longer based upon consent but upon there being no obvious alternative to him immediately available and on fear. Certainly fear must be regarded as the converse of the hysteria against the Babis and would be the natural consequence of the stern orders from the injured Shah for their extermination. In a country like Iran, however much one group may seem to revel in the discomfiture of another, nobody is unwise enough to forget that, in the caprice of events, their own turn to suffer a similar fate may quickly follow.

The Shah began increasingly to seek an escape from loneliness in the harem. Favourites whose demands on his time and his purse were only equalled by their ignorance and levity became an obsession. Their company was tantamount to a drug with which to assuage his fits of disillusionment between bouts of his own efforts to renew attempts to reform and regenerate the country. The clergy were, of course, not on the side of Babis. Nor were they invariably in unison with the sedimentarily ignorant but ebulliently, or cunningly, self-seeking élite. At the same time, it is not to be expected that shrewd mullas, anxiety for their own potentially threatened position growing, would gladly commit themselves to the cause of an embarrassed monarch, There was little trust between them and a ruling prince whose obsessive passions ranged from a gardener's daughter to an ugly small boy, and whose conduct generally increasingly gave rise to scandal. The gravity of the Cloth could not but seek dissociation from the follies of the Throne, while in its wiser moments the Throne felt little sympathy for the Cloth, regarding it as representative of backwardness.

With the nobles venal and divines reluctant, it might have been an opportune moment for the Shah to turn to the burgher class for support instead of retreating into the harem, and, as he did a little later, selecting a butler's son as chief minister. But the Shah was the prisoner of his environment. He was manipulated by the Court, whether in the persons of the nobles or of its attendant women and servants, and, as he seems always to have realised and regretted, he remained cut off from the people.

He suffered because of the aloofness ancient Iranian tradition required of the Throne; the sacredness of the Throne, which at the end of his reign was to be signally affronted, was a burden and a hindrance to him. There was, however, after the shock of 1852, one possible way by which to regain the confidence of his people and a sense of unity with them: enterprises in foreign policy might create a diversion and at the same time win glory for the Shah in the eyes of the people, and perhaps their love as well.

Events seemed to be conspiring to make such a diversion feasible. Shortly after the attempt on the Shah's life it became known that Russia was heading for war with Turkey. This would mean Russia's involvement on another front and consequent relaxation of pressure on Iran. It was a very tempting prospect. In Iran so far as external policy went the situation was dominated by the personality of the Amir-i-Kabir's successor as Sadri-i-'Azam. The Sadr-i-'Azam in question wanted to rid himself of the odium of subservience to foreign legations. He had once been protected by the British and so was particularly suspected of being under their influence; but he was eager to be free of the imputation that he was submissive to either Britain or Russia. In the matter of relations with the two Great Powers, the late Amir-i-Kabir's reputation had been unassailable and it is possible that his successor wished to emulate him in this.

His first move manoeuvred the Russian envoy into a position of acute embarrassment, and incidentally provides an example of what can happen in dealing with an Iranian notable. The Sadr-i-'Azam's opportunity came because Prince Dolgorouky tried to bypass him, probably because he was suspicious of his connections with the British, and had a secret interview with the Shah. From this the Sadr-i-'Azam was able to begin a huge gamble during which his excitement continued to mount and his ingenuity continued to be exercised until, in the spring of 1857, his bluff was called. Then came the plunge into depression and the palsy of the fear that rash acts might have disastrous consequences; the Sadr-i-'Azam asked for the text of the Treaty of Paris, concluded in 1857, to be read aloud to him when it arrived in Tehran. Hearing it he could scarcely believe

that his worst fears had not been realised; when he discovered that the British negotiators had not gone so far as to demand his dismissal he ejaculated, 'Is that all?' Assured that it was, he said, 'Alhamdulillah', 'The Lord be praised!'

The Russian Minister at Tehran had been instructed to sue for Iranian support in the event of a Russian invasion of Eastern Turkey. The bait that was offered was Iran's release from financial obligations still outstanding to Russia under the Treaty of Turkomanchai. Though at first he was kept in ignorance of the secret interview between the Shah and the Russian Minister, eventually the Sadr-i-'Azam had to be told that the Shah had agreed to the Russian proposal, while Prince Dolgorouky had already somewhat impulsively communicated this to St. Petersburg. The Shah's revelation of what had occurred gave his chief Minister the initiative of a parent hearing the confession of a wayward child and thus enabled him the more easily to influence Nasiru'd-Din Shah with an apparently extremely subtle suggestion that Iran could gain more advantage from playing the part of an ally to Britain and France than from alliance with Russia.

The Sadr-i-'Azam took his cue from the reference to the Treaty of Turkomanchai in the arrangements that the Shah had made with Prince Dolgorouky. He submitted that if the Shah chose not to side with Russia but to side with Britain, France and Turkey against Russia, his object in effecting annulment of the financial requirements in the Treaty of Turkomanchai could be equally well, if not more certainly, achieved. In partnership with three against one, the Sadr-i-'Azam could point out, Iran was sure to be on the winning side, and once Russia was defeated even a total annulment of the Treaty of Turkomanchai might be possible, to say nothing of the glory Iran would gain from being the companion in victory of two powers like France and Britain. What better means could be found of ensuring for the Shah the loyalty and undying affection of the nation? The Shah found the Sadr-i-'Azam's arguments irresistible and accordingly double-crossed Prince Dolgorouky. The Russian envoy was furious, not least, one imagines, because he had been made to look a fool in St. Petersburg. He demanded a meeting with the Sadr-i-'Azam and during the interview waved his cane about while the Sadr-i-'Azam sat perfectly calm. Unfortunately, towards the end of the meeting the Russian accidentally brought his cane down heavily on to the Sadr-i-'Azam's leg, mistaking it for the floor. The Persian budged only sufficiently to seize the cane and throw it across the room. Apart from this he did not permit himself the slightest discomposure. He did not have to: he had won this round

and he knew it. The Russian Government recalled Prince Dolgorouky and the Sadr-i-'Azam, in showing that after all he was not the man to be overawed by foreign heads of mission, even when they flayed the air with a cane, had achieved an ambition common to many an Iranian statesman.

In order, however, to ensure complete exculpation from the suspicion of favouring foreign interests, not one but two foreign powers had to be considered. The Sadr-i-'Azam's next task was to show that, in spite of his debt to them for protection in the past, he was not afraid of the English; it was now the turn of the British envoy, Mr. Murray, to taste of the Sadr-i-'Azam's wonderful capacity for deceit and calumny.

The idea of Iran's participation in the Crimean War was dropped. In any event an Iranian alliance with Britain, France and Turkey had only been a Tehran fantasy. The other nations concerned had lost no time in making it clear that they were not interested in whatever it was Iran thought she had to offer. The logistics position would have been intolerable if Russia had attacked Iran and this was not outweighed by any positive advantages in an alliance with Iran. The Sadr-i-'Azam was not daunted by the collapse of his plans for an alliance with the three powers against Russia; on the contrary, it now behoved him to see what could be made of Great Britain's Crimean preoccupations. Mr. Murray found himself the object of a series of provocations and slanders it was exceedingly difficult to combat.

The onslaught began when the Sadr-i-'Azam chose to protest against the British Legation's employing a certain Iranian as Persian Secretary. Mr. Murray compromised to the extent of suggesting that, if his employment in Tehran were objectionable, the person in question be allowed to go to Shiraz as the British Agent there. The basis of the Sadr-i-'Azam's objection was ostensibly that the man had been discharged from Persian Government Service and he had himself originally suggested that he go to Shiraz, but he now objected. It became apparent that the Sadr-i-'Azam's aim was Mr. Murray's recall in the same way as his Russian counterpart had been recalled. The whole issue rested on a complete fabrication. The Persian official round whom the controversy raged had been summarily dismissed from Persian service and told to go wherever he pleased: the Persian Civil Service in those days was not so well organised that formal discharges with conditions about future employment were the rule. But once embarked upon, there is no limit to how far fabrication can go and the Sadr-i-'Azam next set on foot the rumour that Mr. Murray's concern for his Persian Secretary

was due to interest in that gentleman's highly-born Persian wife. This slander gained ground and in 1855 Mr. Murray hauled down his flag and left with his Mission for the Iranian border. There was a pause. The British Government did not seem bent on taking any swift action and so the triumphant Sadr-i-'Azam thought the moment ripe for the second, and the biggest, of his *coups*: he would revive the Herat affair.

Several things could be accomplished under the cover of an expedition to Herat. Not least could the attention of the Iranian people be diverted from other problems, while the endeavour to restore confidence in the Shah would also be promoted. The British were occupied in war with Russia: the Sadr-i-'Azam did not doubt that they would be unable to intervene in time to prevent Persian arms from achieving some success and, as it happened, Herat did surrender to Nasiru'd-Din Shah's army. To gain some minor successes would serve a dual purpose in the shifts to which the Shah and his Minister were now resorting: gratification of the British by a post-war retraction would serve to restore the Shah and the Minister in British favour; at the same time, it would give the Shah's people a villain, the British, towards whom to direct popular resentment. Whichever way he looked at it, the Herat expedition held attractions for the Sadr-i-'Azam.

He chose to ignore such diplomatic minutiae as the Shah's undertaking of 1853 to the Government of India that he would not interfere in the affairs of Herat; but the Government of India, unfortunately for the Sadr-i-'Azam's plans, did not choose to ignore this undertaking. General Outram sailed from Bombay with a British-Indian force to reinforce troops already in the Persian Gulf and invade southern Iran. The island of Kharg was taken and the British post at Bushire strengthened. In addition to his infantry and cavalry, General Outram had resourceful support from the Bombay Marine, in whose history this campaign looms large with honour. The campaign of General Outram was a classic operation, if only because until 1941 it was the sole British attempt at a landing in Persia. Also, in the outcome, it was a rather fruitless campaign, of more interest to the military historian than the political: it afforded an early example of combined naval and army action in Outram's capture of the port of Muhammarah – now called Khurramshahr – at the mouth of the River Karun. But the Treaty of Paris, the same which made the Sadr-i-'Azam exclaim, 'Is that all?', was concluded in March 1857, twenty-two days before Outram rounded-off his successes by the capture of Muhammarah and token seizure of Ahwaz, some one hundred miles inland up the Karun. Chief among the

casualties on the British side in this wasted effort were two officers who committed suicide, one because he felt unequal to the responsibility he had to bear; the other because he felt he could not adequately measure up to the General's standards of proficiency.

The Treaty was ratified at Baghdad on 2nd May, 1857, and established perpetual peace between Her Majesty the Queen of England and His Majesty the Shah of Persia. Persia undertook to withdraw its troops immediately from Herat and under Articles 6 and 7 bound itself not again to invade Herat or any part of Afghanistan except under threat of aggression; and in no circumstances to attempt permanently to annex any part of Afghanistan or the Herat region. According to Article 9, both parties agreed to establish in each other's dominions Consuls, who were to be on the footing of the most favoured nation. Other Articles provided for the investigation and payment of claims against the Persian Government and Article 13 renewed an Anglo-Persian agreement of 1851 for the suppression of slave-running in the Persian Gulf. This agreement was renewed for a period of ten years from August 1862, the date of the expiration of the first agreement.

Article 10 of the Treaty of Paris provided for the return to Iran, in due form, of Mr. Murray, and a Note appended to the Treaty laid down the manner in which the Sadr-i-'Azam was to write, 'in the Shah's name, a letter to Mr. Murray, expressing his regret at having uttered and given currency to the offensive imputations upon the honour of Her Majesty's Minister. . . .' Some critics in England thought Britain should have retained the island of Kharg, today an important oil-loading station. It would, these critics maintained, have balanced in England's favour the Russian retention of the island of Ashurada in the southern Caspian. Other critics considered that Britain ought not to have abandoned the province of Khuzistan whose two important cities of Muhammarah and Ahwaz General Outram had taken. This was the province which later became the scene of the great British enterprise in oil exploitation and in a few quarters the echoes of those sentiments about the necessity for Britain's occupying Khuzistan were heard again in 1951 when the Iranians nationalised their oil. Needless to say, in 1857 nobody thought of oil: Khuzistan then only presented to armchair strategists a useful base at the head of the Persian Gulf, easily separable from the Iranian centre because of the possibility of its Arab inhabitants' loyalties being without difficulty won away from Tehran; and placed between Iran and Ottoman Turkish territory round the port of Basrah. The critics' views did not find favour and General Outram's gallant men were almost at once summoned back to pressing duties

in India, the Persian Gulf left to marine patrols hunting slave-traders, whose harrassment and ultimate removal the Amir-i-Kabir had conceded to the British in 1851. This had in fact been intended as a counterpoise to his concession of Ashurada to the Russians.

1857 left Nasiru'd-Din Shah with disorder in the northwest and northeast of his realms and the south still agitated after the British invasion. He dismissed the Sadr-i-'Azam and himself assumed conduct of foreign affairs. He had failed either to win increased prestige or the confidence he so much wished for from his people. Lack of this confidence was something no amount of covering up by his ministers and courtiers could altogether conceal from him for, whatever his faults, it seems clear that he became increasingly sensitive to currents of opinion among his subjects; often, however, to be only the more aware of his inability to satisfy them. One thing the ready acceptance of the terms of the Treaty of Paris showed, if the circumstances immediately surrounding the Shah did not, was that he now felt more than ever compelled to rely on support from foreign powers. When there was so little he could rely upon at home, his relations with the outside world assumed a special importance for him. He was, moreover, in need of money.

Chapter 6

The Rocking of Power and the Need for Money

In the foregoing chapter the last attempt made by Iran to reconquer Herat was treated in terms of the political and personal motives of the Shah and his Chief Minister. It was assumed that the Shah acquiesced in the campaign because it might have been the means of allaying discontent at home, and it was suggested that the Sadr-i-'Azam, Mirza Agha Khan Nuri, saw in the expedition both a way of strengthening the Throne and of exculpating himself from the charge of being weak in his dealings with foreigners. There was also the possibility of restoring himself and the Shah to favour with the British by timely retractions from a position he was probably realist enough to know would in any event soon prove untenable. Thus the episode has been seen solely as a political gambit. This aspect of it has been emphasised because it is illustrative of a pattern of events often to be repeated on occasions when a Shah sensed popular disenchantment with his rule and wished to escape from anxieties at home by embroilments abroad. To appear capable of forthright action in the field of foreign affairs has afforded the Shah of Iran down to the most recent times an opportunity of adding glamour to the Throne; although it must be remembered that, in view of Iran's geographical position, such policy can win substantial justification in so far as strong initiative may seem preferable to quavering neutralism or passive submission.

In Iran there is an absence of loyal sentiment towards the Crown. The inclination has generally been for the Shah to be judged by his usefulness to the nation; though so long as he appeared strong and capable, in the eyes of the humble people the Shah represented a force above that of ordinary mortals, an almost god-like last resort, unaffected by the vanities and wickednesses characteristic of lesser men. Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar, the eunuch king, did not delude himself into supposing that he could win his people's love. That was not his business. Instead his aim was to ensure efficient government, first by conquest of the country, then by inspiring terror

in the hearts of servitors to the Crown and potential rebels against it. In this way a general pacification and ordering of the country was possible.

To a great extent a wider measure of settlement than had been known since the fall of the Safavids in 1720–22 was accomplished. It was based mainly on fear and the new Dynast's success in arms. The lack of homogeneity, the size of the country, difficulties of communication and the Qajars' inability to continue their founder's reign of terror, coupled with the perfectionist quest, made the maintenance of this settlement undisturbed an impossibility. For in judging any situation in Iran, the degree to which Iranians carry within themselves a standard of perfection against which to measure any situation, and which must always constitute a potential source of dissatisfaction, cannot be overlooked. They are perfectionists if only because their history has introduced them on repeated occasions to human frailty and the imperfections of the terrestrial condition; while their clear skies and the translucency of their nocturnal vision of the heavens inculcate a sense of the unsullied brilliance of the celestial order, giving an exalted and yet ever present criterion with which to judge sublunary affairs. No earthly order in Iran can ever for long be accepted without criticism and the strains of an individual hankering for change.

For a time, however, the balance imposed by Agha Muhammad survived. His successor was a great man and it survived also under the so much less effective Muhammad Shah, while the youthful Nasiru'd-Din Shah ushered in a reign of hope not unnatural on the accession of a monarch still in his teens. By 1852 the heyday was over and evidence for Nasiru'd-Din Shah's growing realisation of the extent to which his position was in jeopardy has already been noticed. So far it is only the political symptoms that have been revealed, with some reference to the social stresses that were also becoming manifest. But political situations are in a sense the externals of economic situations. Iranians are prone to pay attention to externals, a fact which their teachers' reiteration through the ages that it is the substance that really matters goes a long way to substantiate. Nasiru'd-Din Shah and his Sadr-i-'Azam were no less concerned with appearances than their countrymen have so often been. It may accordingly be supposed that they were concerned between 1852 and 1857 with political and not economic factors. It did not occur to them that the country's unease was the result of an economic transition and an increasing economic imbalance among different sections of the community.

Besides being, in Dr. Hambly's words, 'one of the makers of

modern Iran,'[1] Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar was destined to be the last medieval type of Persian ruler. Even had Nasiru'd-Din Shah had the force of character of his ancestor, it was no longer possible for him to indulge in the military exploits whereby the rule of an autocrat could be sustained, while liberal ideas from abroad and increasing royal ineffectiveness at home were in any case shaking the whole basis of his position to a profound extent. The holocaust of 1852 may have been an attempt to impose the rule of fear. It had had the strange result of a mass sharing in the letting of blood ordered by the monarch, as if to show him that execution was no longer the royal prerogative only, but could be turned into a disquieting demonstration of the subjects' discontent.

The Babi movement had itself sprung from among the mercantile classes, a fact which recalls us to the realisation that, as political strains can be symptoms of economic ills, so in a country like Iran can religious movements reflect the anxieties of classes engaged in commerce. In terms of a new religious hope, the Babi movement was part of a syndrome indicating the stress of mounting economic and social tension. Ironically the fostering by the early Qajar kings of the merchants had done a great deal to bring about this tension. European observers early in the nineteenth century had noted the Qajars' policy of exempting merchants from all exactions other than Customs duties. Agha Muhammad Khan had been swift to punish anyone guilty of molesting wealthy burghers. This was a change from conditions under the last Zand rulers, when the merchants of Shiraz had at times been compelled to disgorge large sums to the government and its military adjuncts. Fath 'Ali Shah had apparently carried royal support of commerce to the lengths of discouraging imports in order to protect home industries.[2] Thus between 1800 and 1857 the merchants had in effect become a rather pampered class. The forceful redefinition of the frontiers and the care exercised by Agha Muhammad over the border entrepot cities had given the Iranian merchant greater scope than he had enjoyed since the middle of the Safavid period. Agha Muhammad failed to make Merv an outpost for the trade of Central Asia; as Malcolm was aware, had he not died when he did, 'it is difficult to conjecture the

[1] G. R. G. Hambly, *Aqa Mohammad Khan and the Establishment of the Qajar Dynasty*, Royal Central Asian Journal, Vol. L. Pt. II., April 1963.

[2] In a very interesting article, where new ground in the study of the Qajars is broken, *An Introduction to the Economic Organisation of Early Qajar Iran*, in the Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies, Vol. II, 1964, Dr. Hambly cites a reference to Fath 'Ali Shah's discouragement of the import of Kashmir shawls to protect the home production of, presumably, Kirman shawls.

progress of his arms'; but he succeeded in establishing or re-establishing cities like Erivan, Khoy, Rasht and Qazvin as commanding bases for foreign trade. The first two handled the Black Sea and Caucasian trade and trade with Turkey respectively; the second two were centres for the Russian-dominated Caspian trade. Meanwhile in the south Yazd continued a commercial prosperity her clever and industrious citizens appear to have succeeded in maintaining through the years following the collapse of the Safavids. Kirman and Shiraz began the gradual recovery from the fall of the Zands, being much benefited by the interest in their welfare displayed by the first envoys from the East India Company's representatives at Calcutta and Bombay. On these envoys' routes to Tehran Shiraz was the initial staging post of importance; Kirman came to be regarded as the point of re-entry into civilisation for British agents sent on long and adventurous missions through Sind and Baluchistan, to report to their superiors when the latter had landed elsewhere in Persia.

It was principally with the prospering merchant class that the first foreign contacts after the rise of the Qajars in Iran were made. In this context it should be remembered that so far as the East India Company was concerned, commercial interests did not lag far behind strategic and purely diplomatic considerations, and indeed, when the British sent out Sir Harford Jones directly from the government in London, they shrewdly selected a man who had himself engaged in commerce. The Iranian merchant was preferred by these visitors to the 'arrogant' military classes and his urbanity was a most acceptable alternative to the 'bigotry' of the Mullas. Enlightenment bred of acquaintance with foreigners and other lands spread rapidly among the commercial class; while this class continued to prosper, in marked contrast to the rural masses of the people under the Qajar Shahs.

In Islam the basis exists for an imbalance between the urban and the rural classes' well-being because the Muslim way of life has tended to favour the former rather than the latter. In the first Chapter we noticed how the original Arab colonists were unwilling to take to the plough, and how the splendours of Muslim civilisation are founded on cities. The Qajars' policy towards merchants and Agha Muhammad Khan's solicitude for cities had the result of accentuating a tendency already present. Furthermore, the commercial prosperity of the period under review served to accelerate a swing in Iranian economic affairs from an economy very largely based on transactions in kind to one with more emphasis on money. This worked to the detriment of the cultivators.

Also the new commercial prosperity was neither centralised, nor organised to benefit the peasant on the land. Lists of Iran's exports, to the Ottoman Empire, to Russia and to India, include cotton, tobacco, rhubarb, rice and other cultivated products from which it might be assumed the cultivator derived profit. Gall-nuts and herbs can be included, with the assumption that those who collected such items benefited from their export. Fish played a big part in exports to Russia, surely of benefit to the fishermen on the shores of the Caspian. But in fact the cultivator, the gardener, the nut collector and the fisherman did not thrive commensurately with the expansion in foreign trade. The age had come when the Iranian nobleman ceased to be to the peasants of his district a remote and patriarchal figure contented with annual tribute in kind to feed his dependents; while taxes were also payable in products, so that the cultivator was spared the opportunities for oppression afforded by sales of crops for conversion into cash. The landed classes became magnates who could profit from the sale of bulk crops for export; especially cotton, tobacco and rice. Their interest in the land assumed a new vitality as the possibilities of its exploitation for cash income were opened to them. The cultivators became little more than slaves. Their shares in the land remained the same or were rendered insecure while their masters found they could extract large profits. Their masters' overseers began to compel the cultivator to change from cropping on a level sufficient to satisfy the owner's, the government's and the cultivator's needs alone, to working to meet a new type of commercial requirement.

Parallel with this expansion in trade went the government's increased need for money. The Treaty of Turkomanchai imposed on the Shah indemnities to be paid to the Russians in cash. Meanwhile the British had introduced the cash subsidy into their new relations with the Persian sovereign. Hitherto such military forces as had existed had been regular only in so far as they comprised the royal guards and town garrisons; in early Qajar times, according to observers such as J. M. Kinnier,[1] in war an army had quickly been assembled from tribal manpower and the levies provided by the nobility as part of the service they owed the Crown. Both sources provided men who brought their own accoutrements and who, while on active service, were given fodder for their cattle, rice, butter and, in the case of non-tribal troops, clothing for themselves. The transmission of money from warlord to soldiery was minimal and, in a land whose inhabitants were, as Kinnier pointedly remarks, nearly all under arms, the government did not have to supply arms either.

[1] See his *A Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire*, London, 1813.

The system had the advantage of furnishing assemblies of warriors quickly, but they were capable of as soon evaporating if the leader were not successful enough to hold them together. The loyalty of troops whose dependence on the government was so tenuous could not be relied upon. The system worked when conquests were being accomplished and opportunities for plundering plentiful. Agha Muhammad Khan's subjugation of Iran having been completed and the Persian position in the Caucasus reasserted, there was a pause in military expeditions: Fath 'Ali Shah was reluctant to go to war. Then, following defeat by the Russians, as we have seen Prince 'Abbas Mirza realised that Iran needed more modern arms and also an army drilled on European lines. Perhaps what he wished for above all was an army that owed its existence to the government, dependent on it, both for arms, henceforth to be issued from government stores only when needed, and for pay. The unreliability of the old type of army, and the dangers inherent in assembling large concourses that might disperse and become marauders of the countryside, were sufficient to explain 'Abbas Mirza's policy; a policy which, incidentally, probably weakened Iran militarily because the small, newly trained army, operating according to unfamiliar foreign rules, proved not to possess the manoeuvring power of the units with which Agha Muhammad Khan had achieved so many victories, and rapidly degenerated into an unkempt rabble when no longer properly organised and paid.[1] For the purpose of the present argument, however, the point is that these military reforms caused the government to be in greater need of cash than before, to buy weapons and maintain a standing army.

In addition to the crops and sundry small natural products mentioned among exports and shown not to have profited the cultivator so much as landlords with a new attitude towards the land and its use, a number of manufactured goods were exported, sufficient to indicate a growing degree of urban industrialisation. Assessments of the size of the population early in the nineteenth century are difficult because of the absence of sound data: Malcolm stressed the impossibility of even a good guess being made and accepted the estimate of the geographer, Pinkerton, that the total population in 1800 was about 6,000,000. Although Chardin's figure in the seventeenth century, of forty million, was probably an exaggeration, in spite of the decimation of population which had undoubtedly followed the defeat of the Safavids by the Afghans at the end of the first two decades of the eighteenth century, the figure of 6,000,000 for 1800–1801 seems to

[1] I am grateful to Dr. G. R. G. Hambly for suggesting to me these disadvantages courted by 'Abbas Mirza in his policy of military reforms.

err on the small side. Although it has to be remembered that the Afghan invasions and Nadir Shah's great military campaigns apart, there had during later Safavid times and afterwards also been a considerable drain of population from Iran to India, where notable poets, scholars and administrators went to seek conditions of greater tolerance and ease and were doubtless accompanied in their exodus by servants and people belonging to classes more humble than their own.

One thing which does emerge from estimates of population at the beginning of the Qajar era is the comparative populousness of Isfahan, with approximately 200,000 people and a rapid growth, reported by Malcolm 'as a result of efficient administration, which drew population . . . from more remote areas'. Besides Isfahan, the greatest city at the time, other centres, like Yazd, Meshed, Kirmanshah, Kashan, Tabriz and Qazvin, with populations of between twenty and fifty thousand, were substantial enough to provide the basis for development as nuclei of urban industrial growth. Kashan, for instance, was described by Kinnier as a most flourishing city and was famous for its textiles. Exports from Iran included shawls, silk, gold cloth, carpets, woollen goods, cotton thread, chintzes and printed stuffs; goods all of which indicate some degree of industrial organisation. Carpets and rugs remained for years to come a cottage industry, but the textiles for which cities like Isfahan, Kashan, Kirman and Yazd were celebrated, the silks of Rasht and the famous products of other places round the central desert, required communities of workers in cities. These cities grew in size throughout the Qajar period of peace and with the expanding foreign trade. Their inhabitants lived on wages, not on the exchange of commodities. Iran was in fact, under the Qajars, the scene of a minor industrial revolution, and this has significance in the light of the revolutionary outbreaks at the end of the nineteenth century. Once again the Babi movement can be alluded to, as not untypical of the kind of religious speculation and uprising which follow rapid changes from an old pattern of agrarian existence to existence behind the looms and in the crowded workshops of new industrial societies.

This commercial and industrial activity had been started under Shah 'Abbas the Safavid, who had also been anxious for foreign contacts. Under the Qajars therefore it was a renewal of a process begun earlier and then halted by political decline and disintegration. But under the Qajars the process took a different turn. Shah 'Abbas had been careful to keep commercial development allied to strong central government. In order to ensure that the two kept in step under control from a single centre, he made Isfahan his realm's commercial and industrial pivot as well as its political capital. Under

the Qajars, in addition to the imbalance created by mercantile and urban progress contrasted with rural decline, there was an imbalance between mercantile prosperity on a regional, outward-looking basis and gradually diminishing central political power, not based on one of the great commercial and manufacturing cities but on a new capital cut off from the country's peripheral points. The cities of the south prospered from their connection with India and Afghanistan; those of the north, from trade with Russia, Turkey and, to a far smaller extent, Central Asia. The new prosperity could be mapped as a series of arcs in a circle round Iran's 'dead heart', each arc or region of commercial activity looking outwards towards those parts of the world it was in contact with, Tehran and the Shah's Government bidding fair to be left relatively isolated. The Qajars encouraged merchants but, unlike Shah 'Abbas, they did not keep them under close surveillance, their activities knitted into the political fabric of the state.

A pointer to the situation is provided by one of the facts to which Dr. Hambly alludes, in the article already cited, when he says that 'Despite the Irano-Russian wars (of the early nineteenth century) in the Caucasus, (the Irano-Russian trade) tended to increase steadily year by year, and Harford Jones believed that in the years following the Treaty of Gulistan (1813) it had doubled, trebled or even quadrupled in value'. This is important in view of what we shall have to say about the 'commercial wedlock' between northern Iran and Russia and its continuance in spite of political difficulties in more recent times. It illustrates that the merchants carried on with scant regard for the political and military situation created by their political leaders.

In spite of the number of mints established at twenty and more centres for the production of gold and silver coin by Agha Muhammad Khan and added to by his successor, merchants continued to use foreign currencies. This was probably chiefly because Turkish piastres, Dutch ducats and Venetian sequins – the coins in general use – were necessary for foreign trade; but it might also be a further pointer to the dichotomy between political and commercial power. Distrust of the royal regime was ineradicable in the mercantile classes and may have arisen partly because of the Qajars' tribal and totally militaristic origin. However much Agha Muhammad Khan did in fact help the merchants, there is no evidence that as a class they ever liked his dynasty; as already implied, the Babi movement may be regarded as part of their protest against it and ultimately the major tragedy of Nasiru'd-Din Shah's reign was his failure to gain support from the burgher class.

In discussing the rise of the power of money, another factor is the need for money often felt by unpopular rulers in Iran as a means of building up and maintaining their position. It is assumed that loyalty, when not offered in return for effective leadership, can be purchased. At lower levels, money becomes the Open Sesame in a corrupt society. The passage of bribes can ameliorate situations and facilitate all sorts of arrangements. In former days, services were rewarded by grants of land; poets and servants it was wished to honour were given jewels and very often monthly stipends in the form of victuals. Nasiru'd-Din Shah continued the practice, with grave consequences, of conferring land grants or rewarding people with remissions of dues they would otherwise have had to pay. But Nasiru'd-Din Shah's epoch firmly established money as the oil in the wheels of state and on the whole the social and institutional innovations of his time served to make money highly desirable and necessary.

Besides the army, money was wanted to finance new types of civil institution. A new kind of government servant had to be paid cash wages, while a new kind of education began to emerge with the opening in 1851 of the Dar al-Funun, the 'House of Sciences', in Tehran. This College was intended to teach modern science and foreign languages, mainly for the training of civil servants on the European model and the creation of the kind of modern diplomatists Iran required to deal with the Great Powers. Shortly, boys who had received education in this College were to be sent to Europe for further training. At the same time, apart from merchants travelling in the way of business, and in addition to students going abroad for higher education, the tendency grew for members of the aristocracy to make journeys to Europe, where they saw how wealthy Europeans lived and the kind of luxuries they enjoyed. Thus further incentives were found for the acquisition of wealth, to pay for foreign travel and purchase costly toys. In this, as in other matters, the Shah set a notable example of extravagance, although lists of Iran's imports earlier in the century give evidence of how soon the desire for expensive foreign luxury goods followed renewal of contact with the outside world. Certainly the student of the deteriorating condition of the masses of the people in the nineteenth century cannot fail to notice the quantities of luxury goods, velvets, mirrors, coloured glass lamp globes, European lace, etc., imported from Russia and Turkey to satisfy the demands of those classes who only saw in the transition from a closed to an open economy the means of gratifying private fancies and of personal enrichment.

The country's leaders, attracted by foreign delights and filled with

a zeal to imitate that paid attention chiefly to superfluities and, unlike the Japanese, ignored fundamentals, hoping to make Iran modern without too much expenditure of real effort, embarked on modernisation without the income to pay for it. A revenue system existed with a class of experts to operate it, but it was incapable of affording the Treasury either the receipts that were due or the much larger amounts now, with growing urgency, found essential. The power of the notables, the weakness of the Throne and the attitude towards government which was generally prevalent made tax collection extremely difficult. There were many whose aim was to profit from revenue before it reached its destination; and many who knew ways of avoiding paying. There was, moreover, a feeling that regions which prospered, while others did not, owed nothing to a government it was considered common sense to take the initiative in cheating.

When he found that escapades like the attack on Herat were useless, instead of beginning at that relatively early stage to institute reform in revenue assessment and collection, Nasiru'd-Din Shah conceived a new plan for raising money and, incidentally, making himself more independent of his fickle subjects. He decided that, if he could not take the offensive against foreigners, it might be possible to induce them to pay for his quiescence. But loans from foreign governments have strings attached to them and it was not long before another scheme, that of selling concessions to foreign individuals, commended itself to him. Individuals were less powerful than governments. They paid readily for concessions the granting of which was both lucrative and gave the impression that the Shah and his friends were anxious to see their country efficiently exploited. This indeed was a modern approach and showed how easily some of the more dubious ethics of the West had been absorbed.

The first telegraph was introduced in 1858 but it was with the signing of a convention with Great Britain in 1862 that development of this means of communication began in real earnest. At the end of that year the efforts in negotiation of two British officers, Colonel Stewart and Captain Champain, were crowned with success and work could begin on the telegraphic link between London and India through Persia. Iran's telegraph system was further increased as a result of the agreement in 1872 whereby the Indo-European telegraph line from London was to pass along the shores of the Black Sea and through Russian territory directly to Tehran, formerly served from the South by a diversion northwards from the Persian Gulf. These new means of communication must have appeared very valuable to the sovereign of so large a country with communications

otherwise so poor, but Nasiru'd-Din Shah would be unaware of the role these lines were to play in the later revolutionary developments. By 1884 there were fourteen stations belonging to the Indo-European Telegraph Company in Iran and manned by Britishers, and the number of words passing along the wires had risen from 305,485 in 1877 to over a million in 1883. Across Iran's great plains now stood those steel poles which in that monotonous landscape often provide the eye's only distraction. At intervals along the lines of these poles British telegraph engineers set up house with wives they had brought with them or married in Iran, choosing young Armenian ladies in most instances to obviate the necessity of becoming converts to Islam in order to espouse Muslim girls. The Telegraph Company had its own medical officers and penetrated into the country in a manner unprecedented for foreigners. Many of its officials learnt the Persian language and much of the lore of Iranian life. The spread of telegraphic communications and the introduction it entailed of foreign technicians symbolises very dramatically how Iran was being opened up to the outside world.

In 1858 forty-two of the boys who had been educated at the Dar al-Funun were sent to Europe for more advanced studies, an event marking the beginning of another process which was to have important repercussions on Iranian society. In the following year, the Shah inaugurated his first 'Cabinet' or Council of Ministers. Mirza 'Ali Khan the Aminu'd-Daulah's *Khātirāt-i-Sīyāsī* ('Political Memoirs'), which have recently been edited and printed under the auspicies of Dr. Hafiz Farmanfarmayan,[1] record the dismal failure of this piece of initiative on the Shah's part, in keeping with the breakdown of his later attempts to establish responsible ministerial government.

Mirza 'Ali Khan, the Aminu'd-Daulah, is an interesting observer because he was the Shah's principal secretary for much of his career and also held from time to time important administrative posts. He was thus in a position to know what was happening, and his shrewd character perception as well as proximity to the Shah made the latter's mind and weaknesses well known to him. He seems to have been, besides practical, an extremely cynical man; his sarcasm somewhat mars his book, but what is most startling about it, and depressing, is the way the ineptitude of the sovereign and the infidelity and irresponsibility of some of his principal subjects gave rise to situations that have so often been repeated, in years long after the Aminu'd-Daulah's narrative was written. If the names were changed, a great deal that he describes might have occurred only yesterday; a fact which is so striking in the narrative that, along with other and

[1] Tehran, 1962.

apparently anachronistic details, it makes its complete genuineness doubtful.

He gives the impression that the Shah's chief reason for trying to set up a Cabinet was not so much the pursuit of an ideal as tiredness of the task of ruling and bearing responsibility. But while the Shah wanted to shed responsibility onto the shoulders of others, he was not prepared to lose a shred of authority, and this was the main cause for his experiment's failure: the councillors he convened as a Cabinet could not take their new functions seriously, overshadowed as they were by the royal veto. As described by Mirza 'Ali Khan, their meetings were no more than a rather desultory acquiescence in what was regarded as simply His Majesty's latest whim. They met in a garden in the late afternoon or evening and, after a short attempt at serious deliberation, soon resorted to the pipes and tea that were provided as a prelude to dinner, the occasions becoming just another *shabnishini*, evening party.

Whether or not, as the sarcastic Mirza suggests, the Shah thought of forming a Council of Ministers in order to have more time for hunting and the harem, the man who prompted him to do it was certainly serious. Hajji Mirza Husain Sipah Salar was very different from his predecessor, Mirza Agha Khan Nuri, the Sadr-i-'Azam who felt Prince Dolgorouky's cane across his legs and slandered Mr. Murray. The new Sadr-i-'Azam had lived in Istanboul and become acquainted with European systems of government. This was his chief attraction in the eyes of the Shah, who cannot have been as unwilling to undertake reforms for sound reasons as Mirza 'Ali Khan would have us infer. Before the Sipah Salar's experiment, ministries had been departments of the Vazirate over which the Shah presided, in conjunction with or through his chief Minister. These departments had really been bureaux for carrying out the Autocrat's orders. They had no responsibility or initiative of their own; nor were their functions clearly separated or defined. An initial experiment in creating a consultative council of ministers – the emphasis was on these councils' consultative function as advisory bodies to the Shah – was made when three Ministers with specific functions were appointed to try and achieve recognisable areas of administrative operations. They were the Prime Minister, responsible for internal affairs, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The prime mover and chief personality in this first 'Cabinet' was the Sipah Salar, and at a later stage six ministries were evolved and then nine. These were Internal Affairs, War, Finance, Justice, Public Works, Commerce and Industry, a Ministry of 'Sciences' (Education), Foreign Affairs and a Ministry of Court with the Prime Minister functioning in

what, according to the Sipah Salar's plans, was a very clearly defined and responsible position. The Minister of Court was to be the liaison between the Court and the Government; also it seems possible that the Sipah Salar intended this ministry ultimately to serve as a means of limiting the royal prerogative.

The pattern of Nasiru'd-Din Shah's first Councils of Ministers has with only slight modifications remained the same to the present day, but the Sipah Salar's radical and advanced concept of Cabinet government has never been completely realised. It rested on making the position of Prime Minister something much more than that of Shah's messenger to the other Ministers and reporter to him of their doings, seeking from the Shah sanction for tentative ministerial proposals. The Minister of Court was appointed to keep the Shah informed and to convey his wishes to the Cabinet, which was to be controlled by the Prime Minister alone and only responsible to him. Nasiru'd-Din Shah was averse to the Prime Minister having so much power and refused to tolerate curtailment of his own authority and right directly to intervene.

The Sipah Salar's ideal was never put into practice; Prime Ministers who have acted as if they thought themselves independent of the Throne, and the only person to whom other Ministers should be responsible, have failed to effect the necessary compromise with the Crown. Up to the present, the latter has remained the final victor, although sometimes with reluctance, in contests over who should rule. The classic example of one of these contests was provided when in 1953 Dr. Musaddiq refused the Shah's order for his resignation, only to be ousted shortly afterwards by the army. The attitude of those who have succeeded Musaddiq in the office of Prime Minister has been generally speaking in marked contrast to his intransigence. Their submissiveness was typified and stated in the most exaggerated terms by a Prime Minister between 1958 and 1960 who described himself as the Shah's 'slave'.

The serious nature of the Sipah Salar's purpose is indicated by his ruling that the Council should have regular meetings twice a week, not in a private house or garden, but in a properly equipped Council Chamber. Opening one of the Councils the Sipah Salar formed, the Shah declared, 'We have today ourselves come . . . to open ourselves the "State Advisory Council". . . The Council must meet each week, twice, on Saturday and Tuesday, without fail'. But he went on to say, 'Our decrees will be read over in the Assembly and (then) the Assembly will submit its opinion'. He added, paradoxically, that 'In other nations, too, this Assembly is established with complete power and in perpetuity . . . This is the same Assembly that in all places is

called in different languages by a variety of names and we shall call it the "Consultative Council" and "Assembly of Ministers".'[1]

The Shah's ill-co-ordinated and doubtless swiftly uttered sentences, for he spoke rapidly, betray confusion about what the new assembly was for and poorly assimilated bits of information about such bodies in other lands; but it is clear what he meant when he said 'our decrees will be read over . . . the Assembly's views submitted'. The accent on the consultative nature of the Council made it clear that the Shah was to continue to rule and, as Curzon suggests,[2] the foreign model probably most in mind was 'The Imperial Council in Russia'. Although the constitutional movement has since happened and a Parliament now exists, the old question of whether or not the Shah should rule is still widely discussed and thought about. The Sipah Salar obviously believed that the Shah should not rule and to men like him England provided the example to be followed. Others, more extreme, think in terms of a Republic with a President envisaged, it would seem, on the lines of a powerful Prime Minister or of the President of the United States; at least this is how one suspects Musaddiq saw it.

It was part of the Sipah Salar's plans that the Shah should be persuaded to go abroad and see other lands and systems with his own eyes. Between 1860 and 1870 events outside Iran were occurring rapidly and Iran could not afford to be asleep. The Russians took Tashkent in 1865 and Samarqand in 1868. Within a year they came down to occupy places far nearer the borders of Iran than these relatively remote Central Asian cities: they took Krasnovodsk, and Chikishliar on the River Atrek, which divides Iran from Transcaspia.

Foreign travel, except in war, was unprecedented for a Shah, but in Islam pilgrimage provides the perennial excuse for travelling and so it was decided that the Shah should first visit the Holy Places in Mesopotamia. There, incidentally, he saw and was suitably impressed by some of the innovations being made in Baghdad by the then Ottoman Governor, the great Midhat Pasha; he also heeded what he was told about reforms in Turkey itself. After this preliminary excursion it was agreed in 1873 that the Shah should visit infidel lands, starting with Russia. The early part of the royal progress was overclouded by squabbles, and embarrassment to his Russian hosts, in connection with the members and unwieldy size of the royal entourage. After the patience of the Russian officials had been severely taxed, some of the retinue were sent back home from

[1] Mirza ʿAli Khan, op. cit., p. 54.
[2] Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, London, 1892, Vol. I, p. 423.

Moscow, the Shah proceeding to St. Petersburg, not joyfully at all, but vexed and quite unprepared to like foreign lands. Meanwhile at home the absence of the Shah and the Sipah Salar gave the religious classes the chance to begin intriguing against the Minister, whom they accused of trying to make Iran like 'Farangistan', Christendom or the lands of the Franks. This illustrates clerical reaction against the Sipah Salar's schemes, while the position between the Shah and this section of his subjects is shown by his final acceptance of their insistence that the Sipah Salar be prohibited re-entry into Tehran. Later the Shah was able to get back his Minister, in the capacity of Minister for Foreign Affairs, but he was soon again dismissed and died in the post of Governor of Khurasan.

Before they left for Europe in 1873, the Sipah Salar put through a measure based on the belief that financial obligations to Russia could be offset by payments made by a British concessionaire. The concessionaire was a naturalised Englishman, Baron Julius de Reuter, and the Reuter Concession the first major concession to be granted by the Persian Government, and the largest in scope ever to be conceived. It included the right to construct railways throughout the Empire, to work mines and to found a national bank. The Shah could well, it seemed, afford the expenses of his journey when such grandiose schemes were apparently about to be undertaken in his country. He was not alone in thinking the prospect golden: in the course of the Reuter negotiations, Iranian noblemen had learnt that in handling a large concession there are pickings to be had and the chagrin of a Persian dignitary who was not sent to England to be present at the final signing and handing-out of rewards is on record. Not only was the period of foreign concessions being heralded at this time, but also that of advantage-seeking by Iranian notables, finding in these transactions with foreigners a new source of enrichment.

For the Shah the golden prospect was dimmed as soon as he reached Russia where he discovered that his hosts were not pleased about the Concession. This was not altogether surprising, but the forceful way in which the Russians expressed their displeasure gave the Shah pause and then, when he reached London, the real surprise came in that city's lack of enthusiasm for Baron Reuter's plans. This was enough to make the Shah pay attention to his subjects' opposition to the scheme and on his return home the Concession was cancelled. In 1889 Baron Reuter recovered his caution money and salvaged from the wreck of the original scheme the Bank Concession. The Imperial Bank of Persia was established, the British concessionaire having the right to issue banknotes and exploit minerals other than precious stones, gold and silver.

The late Lord Curzon of Kedleston visited Iran as the Hon. G. N. Curzon in September 1889 and in his remarkable book dated the crowding of concession hunters into Tehran from the opening of the first Indo-European Telegraph in 1865.[1] By 1872 the number of concession hunters had reached such proportions that one of the defences of the huge Reuter Concession was that it was preferable for the Shah to deal with a single, all-embracing concessionaire, rather than with hosts of separate ones, all acting in competition with each other and none of them financially stable. In 1865 there were fifty Europeans in Tehran. When Curzon arrived, there were nearly five hundred of whom, he says, many were 'would-be concessionaires, wandering *chevaliers d'industrie, et hoc genus omne*'.

A year before Curzon's arrival the Lynch Brothers obtained a concession for commercial navigation on the waters of the lower reaches of the River Karun. It was neither a very large nor a very profitable deal, but it did two things: opened a trade route over the Zagros Mountains to Isfahan whereby that city's communications with the Persian Gulf were facilitated by means of the *Rah-i-Linj*, as the Lynch Company's pack-route came to be called; secondly, the Karun Concession so to speak paved the way for later and much more important developments in the province of Khuzistan, some twenty years later to become the centre of the Iranian oil industry. The original oil explorers in the early nineteen hundreds had in the Lynch Company's installations on the Karun ready-made amenities for transport which they would otherwise have lacked, as well as the Company's officers' experience of the locality. One interesting aspect of the Lynch Concession was the Iranian Government's caution over not letting the Company build permanent establishments or hold property rights; this may be contrasted with the provisions of the Treaty of Turkomanchai enabling Russian merchants to own house and storage property and restrict entry.

Although the country was being plunged headlong into the era of concessions, this caution seems to prove that the Shah was nervous about the new arrangements. He had to bear in mind Iranian sentiments over any acts that could be interpreted as leading to alienation of Persian soil or property. But the readiness of the concessionaires to pay down substantial sums in cash was a temptation a government badly in need of money could not resist, and throughout the modern period Iran's bugbear has been lack of money; lack of the means with which to catch up with the technological advancement exemplified by the foreign powers with whom Iran was becoming more and more deeply involved. For the Shah and his Ministers thought the

[1] Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, London, 1892, Vol. I, p. 483.

explanation of the power and skills of these foreigners rested on the possession of money. They could not believe that, given money, Iran would not be capable of the same kind of achievement. They were right in perceiving that money spelled power; to be convinced of that the Shah did not need to visit London – the creeping ascendancy of foreign finance over his country was obvious to thoughtful Iranians in Tehran and must have been equally obvious to the Shah. What he and many of his countrymen did not realise was that skills and work came before money and made the wealth possible. They thought in terms of 'the Western Secret', not of the West's energy. At the same time they believed, as Iranians generally do and as many foreigners have done, that their country was potentially very rich. If this wealth could be exploited, then why should not Iran become as powerful as the states of Europe, evidence of whose luxurious riches, especially as manifested by Western grandees, so greatly impressed Iranians who visited European capitals? The thing to do was obviously to get westerners to come to Iran and begin the business of exploitation; Iranians could gain the money, watch the 'Secret' in operation in their midst and expend the minimum of labour. Not for them the burning sun of Khuzistan in the hills where madcap Englishmen were soon to begin arduous days drilling for oil.

The Shah's people did not, however, see the matter in these simple terms and the temptation of concessionaire's gold blinded the Shah to the fact that, as his dealings in concessions further scandalised the nation, he was digging his dynasty's grave. It was not alone the ready money offered by concessionaires that made him unable to resist the process by which the country's resources were being mortgaged. In striking contrast to many of his own leading men, who were often lazy, venal and so silly that Nasiru'd-Din, who was sometimes very silly himself, must, nevertheless, have seen through their puerility, the foreign concessionaires appeared competent and business-like; and they had the 'Secret'. Moreover they were not Iranian: while he had not been able to trust the few clever men his environment had presented him with, the Amir-i-Kabir for example, or Hajji Ibrahim the Sipah Salar, he did not feel the same immediate threat to himself in the foreigners, whom in any event he kept at a distance, comporting himself towards them and their diplomatic representatives with considerable dignity and not a little hauteur, and gaining from them the most flattering attentions. In his relations with his own leading subjects, he was perhaps not always aware of the difference between innate folly and that which was assumed, as deliberately cultivated irresponsibility and wild incom-

petence, in a form of resistance to the Shah; the negative expression of unwillingness to co-operate with the autocrat.

An example which comes to mind is what happened on one occasion when, as he several times did, the Shah spoke of reforming the law. After he had been persuaded that the Islamic religious law, the Shari'a, did not of itself need improving upon as a code, its fault being in inconsistent execution and failure to meet modern contingencies, he ordered that a committee should be formed to revise the code in the light of modern requirements and lay down fresh rules for executing the law. To head this committee, a Minister was chosen who was versed in the language of Muslim jurisprudents, namely Arabic, and who enjoyed amicable relations with the most eminent canon legists of the day. The committee met, with the usual accompaniments of pipe-smoking and thrice-daily collations, paid for by the government, in the Minister's house, and, after a few meetings, its deliberations petered out, their result being nil because minutes of the meetings were not so much as sent to the government archives. The Shah had wanted law reform. On this, his first effort to get it, nothing whatever was accomplished – his wishes were passively resisted.

Although from all accounts he had not been very happy during his first experience of Europe – perhaps because his own and his companions' oddity made him feel self-conscious and because of the strangeness of it all – nevertheless he repeated the journey on two occasions, once in 1878 and for the last time in 1889, when he did not again visit England. He seems to have become gradually rather schizoid over his foreign contacts. His diaries of his journeys show that he was disgusted, disappointed or merely confused by many things he saw. Meanwhile the clamour of Europeans in his own capital, and his own increasing involvement with them and their governments, made him from time to time petulantly indicate that he wished no foreigner had ever set foot in Iran; and well he might.

The first major row over a concession occurred in 1892; it might be said that the second was in 1951, when Dr. Mussadiq nationalised the oil. But before discussing the storm over the Persian Tobacco Concession, it is first necessary to take up the theme of the mullas and the state of clerical opinion. We left the mullas just after their confrontation with the Amir-i-Kabir and the Babis; a confrontation from which they emerged shaken but on the whole triumphant – at least they stayed on the field after the others had departed. Subsequently a number of political and social phenomena had appeared on the clerical horizon. Among them may be cited, in roughly chronological order, Mirza Malkum Khan's establishment of a

Masonic Lodge in Tehran in 1860, new views on the nature of government, the royal tours abroad, the founding of a girl's school (1865), the declaration of the rights of subjects with, in 1889, the formation of a committee to draw up legal enactments covering this modern conception; and the Russian occupation of the ancient Islamic city of Merv near the Persian border. The keynote was change; not in the form of a slow evolutionary process, but rapid, in some instances iconoclastic change; in others, threatening change, as with Russia's advance across Asia.

The declaration of the rights of the subject may be taken as an example of measures which at least bordered on iconoclasm, for hitherto in Islam men's rights had theoretically been taken care of by religion. Islam purports to cater for every aspect of the life of a human-being, whose every gesture is governed by some aspect of the Shari'a. Muslim theologians are equally jurists and the Ulama faced with attempts at reform, saw their role being gradually usurped by secular authorities. At first there was only the thin end of the wedge because Nasiru'd-Din Shah, besides being careful in legal matters to seek his advisers from among those laymen who were familiar with the jargon of the 'Ulema and on good terms with them, was also noticeably fainthearted in the reforms he attempted, so that he did little profoundly to change the fabric of Iranian society; he merely weakened it.

The Shah's position was tolerated and sanctioned by the Shi'ite religious institution, in such a way that a delicate balance of mutual goodwill and support had to be maintained. At the same time, those who wanted fairly radical reform had also to be placated and the practice appeared among some of the chief men in the country of accepting and employing the clichés of modernism without believing in them or really intending that they should ever be realised in practice. Beneath the homage paid to progressive ideals lay a conservatism founded on the practical sense that anything approaching extremism had to be avoided, in order that the different interlocked segments of traditional society, which propped each other up in a state of finely balanced tension, should not be disturbed to the extent of bringing down the whole structure. At a much later period, after the Second World War, an intimate friend asked an eminent Mujtahid, known to be of an unusually enlightened cast of mind, whether he thought that the religious institution could be transformed. 'No,' he said. 'Why not?' 'Because were I to tamper with one brick in the foundations the whole structure would crumble.' Also in the late 1950's the ardour of the man who was then in charge of the Iranian Plan Organisation, the body respon-

sible for the country's economic development, was heartening to see and Mr. Abu'l Hasan Ebtehaj's name became internationally famous for honesty, zeal and, ultimately, the frustration of a man who wanted to do the best for his country and who seemed to be prevented from achieving his aims by the 'corruption', tortuousness, selfishness and the sheer folly and wickedness of his compatriots. But watching Mr. Ebtehaj's failure one saw that part of his trouble was that he really *believed* in the necessity for changes to which his colleagues in many instances were only paying lip service.

This is not the severe criticism of the others which at first it may seem to be; the fault of the zealous reformer lies in his forgetting to be, at the same time as he is a reformer, also an Iranian. Conservatives, aware of the danger to their society of a sudden dislocation of traditional patterns, can be justified. If they too repeat the phrases about the need for progress, it is often because they are unable to articulate their own case, against reform and in favour of some of the better values of the old society; and because a certain sense of courtesy, perhaps wrong, perhaps resulting in a form of deceit, prompts them to say what they think foreign exponents of progress for Iran would like them to say. The habit of pleasing the stranger by uttering the kind of sentiments he is thought to admire is part of the Iranian and Oriental idea of politeness. Thus even the apparently reactionary elements deserve, in the words of Curzon, 'a friendly and even a lenient consideration', for, 'what we call civilisation and sometimes rashly confuse with progress, is viewed by Oriental peoples in a wholly different perspective; . . . different nations have their own peculiar way of finding salvation'.

In the nineteenth century the religious classes saw their power being gradually whittled away, for the penalty of the Islamic religion's all-embracingness to cover what in Christian countries were secular social and political affairs was that modernisation meant secularisation and the wide domain of religion being eroded. If religious prejudices and conservatism stood in the way of progress, such encroachment by the secular powers was inevitable and doubtless justified. But as the prestige of the religious institution was affronted, its capacity to preserve moral standards was accordingly diminished; and its noble functions, of ensuring the succour of the poor and the upholding of civic virtues, became gradually less and less effective, with disastrous results. In the days before the Constitutional Revolt of 1906 and under the Qajar despotism, the lot of the people left much to be desired, but it was unusual for anyone in the towns actually to die of starvation or to be forced to go naked. Religious custom decreed that the rich men of the various quarters into which

Persian cities were divided distributed alms and provided meals for the destitute and, on specific festivals during the year, raiment also. A type of depravity and of utter deprivation have been witnessed in recent times which would have been inconceivable in the time of Nasiru'd-Din Shah. The population of cities has increased enormously and old systems of eleemosynary, founded on religious precept and motivated by the consciousness that on Judgment Day men are called to account for their actions, would no longer be adequate; but the general absence of charity must be ascribed to the decline of religious belief and practice, while the secular forces which have encroached on the influence of the religious have not so far provided sufficient substitutes for social services which were taken for granted under the aegis of the Faith.

Chapter 7

The Tobacco Concession

Not surprisingly as the years and changes multiplied during Nasiru'd-Din Shah's long reign, there was a closing of the clerical ranks and, in spite of occasional efforts through his chief minister to keep in touch with the divines, a widening of the gulf that separated them from the throne. What increased clerical concern, eventually to harden into implacable opposition from some of the ranks of the religious, were not merely the reformist tendencies shown from time to time by the Shah, but more than anything else his and his ministers' dalliance with concession-mongers, and the royal journeys to Europe. During the last of these, evidence of the restlessness of the clergy and a trial of their strength were provided by an outburst against the Jews. Shaikh Agha Najafi excited disturbances in Isfahan and Shiraz during which a Jew was murdered and his assailant for a time allowed to go unpunished, in the end only receiving the sentence of the bastinado. The Shaikh improved on the situation by reviving archaic sumptuary laws against the Jews, by which they were humiliatingly differentiated from other members of the community. The Prince Governor of the south, the Shah's son, the Zillu's-Sultan, was unable to prevent these outrages because he was afraid of the power of the mullas. Curzon sums up the situation as follows: '. . . decadent though the power of the *mullas* has become in contrast to their former pride, the hold of Islam, as a system over Persia, is not seriously weakened, fanaticism can still be played upon by adroit fingers . . .'[1] But he was writing before the events of the early years of the twentieth century. Then the clergy themselves were divided, a large and powerful group of them siding with the most progressive elements in the nation and so, ironically, unwittingly helping, as the event proved, to ensure victory for neither progress nor religion, but for the old élite.

In the eighteen eighties the mullas were too close to the people, upon whom, after all, their living largely depended, to remain unaware of the deterioration in the well-being of the masses brought about by modern trends; especially among the rural masses, who

[1] Curzon, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 511.

comprise the vast majority. One factor, as already noticed, which affected the cultivator's tax relations with authority, was the government's increased demand for cash. Another factor, to which we have already alluded, was a new way of thinking about proprietorship among magnates recently acquainted with European luxury based on the purchasing power of money; with European forms of land-ownership and the manner of profiting from it; and with new channels for commercial exploitation of agricultural produce.

If for no other reason than that they faced each other across it, neither Russia nor Great Britain deemed outright occupation of Iran feasible. It was to lie between their respective Asian and Indian empires. It was to be kept in a condition of moderate prosperity and internal concord, but remain susceptible to their influence. There was, in any event, no point in subsidising its government without getting something in return; and it was a market. Iran had to be made attractive to investors and neither power's interests would be served if it became so debilitated that its fall was unavoidable. Curzon applauds 'the policy of assisting Persia by foreign capital where she cannot assist herself'. Conversely, he deplores the shock to Persian credit occasioned by the collapse in 1890 of the State Lottery scheme and the Persian Investment Corporation formed to manage it.

Hence British and Russian agencies were interested in maintaining exports as well as in pushing imports. After the opening of the Trans-Caspian railway, which reached Ashqabad on the Khurasan border in December 1885, in three years exports from Khurasan doubled. The major items were cotton (to Russia) and opium, bought for the Chinese market by British interests and shipped out of Iran through the Persian Gulf port of Bandar Abbas. In the same period Russia was distributing cotton seed in Azerbaijan in the hope of encouraging its cultivation in that province, although there conditions for it were less favourable than in Khurasan. The over-all effect of these efforts was to accelerate the introduction of commercial cropping into an agrarian economy hitherto geared to local self-sufficiency. To be a land-owner was no longer to be part of an internally interdependent scheme. It was to be a profiteer, dependent upon foreign markets. Cultivators became slaves who produced commercial crops not to feed themselves and the land-owners, but to fill the land-owners' pockets. Hitherto the cultivator had been able to add to his income by the proceeds of cottage industry, principally carpet-weaving. But along with foreign traders' interest in bulk commercial crops went their interest in large-scale manufacture and export of carpets. The Persian rug trade was booming in Europe and

America. Dealers began to sense the drying-up of supplies of antique (and not so antique) rugs which up to a point Tabriz merchants had been able to obtain to meet an eager demand. (Rugs which were not so old were exposed to the sun on the roofs of the warehouses in Istanboul to acquire the fashionable hues before being sent on to London and New York to be retailed.) Foreign carpet dealers therefore decided to go to the source of their wares and set up factories there, or organise groups of villages into units capable of a regular reliable output. A cottage industry became a highly organised, capitalist concern controlled by remote agents and impulses. Village craftsmen were converted into wage-earning workers, with a consequent further separation between them and their traditional way of life, and loss of such independence and dignity which an ancient social system, whatever its hardships, had provided.

It could be argued that these social and economic dislocations were going in the long run to benefit Iran. In fact short-term benefits were not entirely lacking. But short-term benefits to a minority, whatever the long-term advantages may be, do nothing to obviate inevitable human responses to a sudden uprooting from traditional systems. The responses in Iran crystallised with rapidity into revolutionary ferment. This ferment, as will be shown, contained a markedly millennial element in its aspirations. The association between millennialism and disturbances of ancient social and economic relationships has been demonstrated more than once in Persian history and never more so than in the events of the period we are now approaching, at the end of the nineteenth century. Babism was one, and an obvious, example; but Babism was premature because it represented religious ferment preceding drastic social upheavals. Babism expressed some of the intellectuals' reaction to what they could anticipate was going, or ought, to happen to their country. But in the last years of the century in the attitude of the clerics, or an important number of them, the process was reversed: religion began to respond to social changes already well under way.

One of the figures who had most to do with giving this response direction was Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din Afghani. He was a political philosopher as well as theological reformer, capable of the most subtle dialectic and of tenacious loyalty to his principles; fearless and devoted to his cause, but in practice perhaps not so much a great man as a great agitator. His cause, put briefly, was to save Islam and adapt it to modern conditions so that, in spite of the flood of modern ideas, Islam might re-emerge triumphant and the unquestioned arbiter of the lives of the people of Muslim areas of the world. He was born in 1839 and it is now widely held in Iran that

he was an Iranian by origin and born in Assadabad, a place near Hamadan on the road from Baghdad to Tehran, the old highway from the Near East to Central Asia. Hence he is often called 'Assadabadi', but he spent some two years of his early life in Afghanistan and is also given the epithet 'Afghani'. He acquired a knowledge of the Muslim sciences and made the Pilgrimage. He held political office under his Afghan patrons and must presumably have been accepted by them as a Sunnite – for Afghanistan is predominantly a Sunnite country – not, as might be expected of a man born in Persia, a Shi'ite. In various ways during his career in Kabul he would soon become acquainted with British power and methods in India. In 1869 he visited India, Egypt and Turkey, moving from one Sunnite centre to another: his life of roaming had started. He was expelled from Egypt by the British authorities and kept under surveillance at Hyderabad, in India, until the suppression of 'Arabi Pasha's revolt in Egypt made it no longer necessary to detain him. His travels twice brought him to London, where Wilfred Scawen Blunt introduced him to eminent people, and it is said that he also went to America. He spent long periods in Paris whence he issued pamphlets and newspapers whose purpose was to arouse Islam. He also spent periods in Istanboul, where the clergy deeply suspected him but Sultan 'Abdu'l-Hamid was more amenable. It was on the Bosphorus that he died, in 1897; he had lived to see the assassination of Nasiru'd-Din Shah, achieved in 1896 by one of his disciples.

The Sayyid twice had dealings with the Shah, and twice went to Iran. His main propaganda being the justification of Islam as a viable way of life for modern times and his main purpose, to arouse Muslims to stem the tide of western domination, he was for a long time looking for a suitable leader, a Muslim sovereign who should lead the Muslim world in its regeneration. Failing in the discovery of a suitable Muslim king for this purpose, at least the Sayyid hoped in his wanderings to find a Muslim power capable of being the nucleus of the resurgence against expanding Christendom which was his desideratum. Egypt and Turkey had been obvious first choices. In the former, Muhammad 'Ali Pasha had been in the van of Muslim modernisation; he had sent a first batch of students to Europe as early as 1826 and attempts by the Ottoman government to begin reforms sometimes look as if in inception they were intended to show that the Sultan did not intend to fall too far behind the Pasha in progressiveness. In Turkey itself there had been a marked response to a movement inspired about 1870 for Muslim union to resist the advance of Russia and Britain[1] and the third article of the

[1] Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Oxford, 1961, p. 335.

1876 Turkish Constitution reiterated the claims of the Ottoman Sultans to the Caliphate of Islam. But although in Egypt he achieved eminence as a teacher and polemicist and left a celebrated disciple, and in Turkey, in spite of suspicion and calumny, he was eventually able to end his days, in neither country did Jamalu'd-Din find the sort of scope he was seeking. Perhaps some impurity in his own motives occasioned this failure; or perhaps he failed to find achievement in these two countries for the same reason as in Iran – there were others who resented his claims, who found him dangerous. After Turkey and Egypt he came to Persia, not, however, at the invitation of Iran's Shi'ite clergy, but rather at the behest of the Shah and his chief minister; while it was a lay admirer, a merchant, who gave the Sayyid hospitality in his house. The Shah soon found the Sayyid's outspoken criticism of everything he saw at Iran's Court and in the administration exasperating and intolerable. The Sayyid departed.

This first flirtation between the Court of Persia and Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din Afghani was renewed when the Shah was persuaded to invite the Sayyid back to Iran after meeting him in Germany and Russia in 1889. The Sayyid's detractors might find material against him on examining the possibility that he tried to convince people close to the Shah of his usefulness as an intermediary between Persia and Russia; or tried to present himself as a prize worth having by exaggerating his international importance. He may have entertained hopes of high office in Iran; the evidence suggests both that he did and that his hopes were to some extent flattered by his host. But whatever the Sayyid himself may have thought a return to Iran would bring him, there was a good reason for the Shah's principal adviser at this time, the Aminu's-Sultan, wanting him there.

The post equivalent to Sadr-i-'Azam, of principal minister, was held in fact, although not with the title of Sadr-i-'Azam, by this Mirza 'Ali 'Askar Khan, known as the Aminu's-Sultan, 'The Trusted of the Sovereign'. Reference has already been made to the Shah's gradually, so to speak, preferring the company of the stables to that of the nobility. In fact Agha Ibrahim, the Aminu's-Sultan's father, was not a stableman; he became the Shah's *Ābdār Bāshī*, roughly equivalent to Head Butler. Later he gained the title which his son also bore; and both men were equally malodorous in the nostrils of the Persians. One of the little acts by which the father had ingratiated himself with his royal patron was making a small profit on the expenses of the royal household by selling the refuse of the stables, as he also raised cash by disposing of the bottles in which rose-water had been sent to the palace from Kashan. The small sums

raised in this way were handed over to the Shah, who was delighted. By such gestures did this man, born of an Armenian woman from Tiflis and at one time apprenticed to a shoemaker in Tehran, manage to bring himself to the notice of Nasiru'd-Din Shah, in whose suite he had been in Tabriz as a servant, when the Shah was there as Crown Prince. From these humble beginnings, Agha Ibrahim reached the highest possible place in the Shah's confidence. He was the kind of man to whom the Shah, disillusioned with his nobles, increasingly turned. He became the familiar of the harem; the understander of the Shah's whims; the almost illiterate creature with whom conversation need never be too serious, but who could be witty, sagacious about small domestic matters, careful of the Shah's comforts, especially on journeys, and apparently utterly loyal.

It is said that his son, who succeeded him in the Shah's good graces, quickly learnt two words: *millati*, 'national' and *tajarati*, 'commercial'; words which contact with nineteenth-century Europe could not help but make of high significance in the ears of his master. The son became notorious for concession dealings. To many it seemed as if he were bent on selling Iran bit by bit to foreigners, even as his father had begun by selling old bottles and stable dung to help the royal purse. The son also collected for himself a number of ministries, the Ministry of the Interior, of Court, the Treasury and Customs, besides becoming the concessionaire of the Royal Mint, and for all intents and purposes the Minister of Foreign Affairs – all while still only about thirty-four years of age. Thus, second to the Shah, the Aminu's-Sultan was the most powerful man in the country. Accompanying the Shah on the journey to Europe in 1889, he had made the contacts with Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din preparatory to Jamalu'd-Din Afghani's return to Iran. Under the Aminu's-Sultan the country's financial situation was worsening. The value of the currency was extremely low; Curzon noted that when he was in Persia, in 1889–90, the *tuman*, which in Malcolm's days at the beginning of the century had been equivalent to one pound sterling, was worth only from five and sixpence to six shillings. In 1874 it had been worth about eight shillings. In 1877 a Royal Mint to make coinage for the whole realm had been set up in a disused cotton factory in the capital, replacing mints which existed formerly in most of the principal cities. The author of the political memoirs to which reference has been made in these pages, Mirza 'Ali Khan, Aminu'd-Daulah, had been chiefly instrumental in persuading the Shah to call in the old, much abused and much counterfeited hammer-struck coins and establish a central Royal Mint on the European pattern. No doubt Mirza 'Ali Khan hoped to have its administration. For a

time he did, but to his intense annoyance the Aminu's-Sultan soon added this to his now numerous other offices. Indicative of the hold the Aminu's-Sultan had over the Shah is the fact that, although he was deprived of the concession to mint copper coins because of flagrant malpractices, nevertheless he soon regained it, while difficulty over maintaining the worth of the coinage of Iran continued throughout Nasiru'd-Din Shah's reign. There were periodic scenes: a committee of investigation into the running of the mint would be set up, Jewish assayers called in to report on the coinage, but the Aminu's-Sultan always managed to survive these inquiries and nothing was put right.

The great historian of modern Iran, Ahmad Kasravi, shows that the Aminu's-Sultan had a lot to do with Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din Afghani's second visit[1] and this may be related to the growing opposition the Aminu's-Sultan's administration of affairs was attracting, not least from the clerics: because a powerful religious personage like the Sayyid, with his capacity for intrigue, could at such a juncture be extremely useful in the hands of the Shah and his minister; or so it must have seemed to the Aminu's-Sultan, for what better counterweight could he have to clerical opposition than a man like the Sayyid, acting on his behalf, and what better means could be adopted of persuading the world of a sincere desire for reform than by retaining the services of the famous reforming zealot of contemporary Islam? The Aminu's-Sultan, however, reckoned without the Sayyid's candour. He forgot that he refused to remain anywhere where he could not in reality influence events. Instead of staying in Tehran and becoming a sort of adornment to a Court dressed up to look as if it were progressive, the Sayyid, after a few pungent utterances on the general state of affairs, left the capital and took sanctuary in the shrine at Shah Abdul Azim, a few miles away, thence shortly afterwards to be expelled by force and driven out of the country. He had already become one of the Shah's bitterest critics. He left Iran his most bitter foe.

In 1890 a Tobacco Concession was granted to an English Company for monopoly of the curing and sale of Iran's entire tobacco crop. Here with a vengeance was the Aminu's-Sultan's 'commercial' policy, the 'Aminu's-Sultan way', as he was in the habit of saying when colleagues, notables or influential men of the cloth, discreetly questioned his actions. The concession was for fifty years and the government of Iran was to receive a rent of £15,000 a year plus one quarter of the annual profits after payment of expenses and

[1] Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-i-Mashrutiyyat dar Iran* ('History of Constitutionalism in Iran'), Tehran 1340/1961–2, p. 11.

a five per cent dividend on the capital. The concession included provisions for the construction of warehouses all over the country, so that the concessionaires' operations would have entailed further foreign infiltration.

At first glance this in itself may not seem so very important. In spite, however, of their great charm and exquisite courtesy, their love of talking and the way in which they rejoice in the sound of words, the Iranians are a reticent people. The lack of privacy necessitated by social conventions of unfailing hospitality to the stranger who comes to their gate and of always being accessible, especially where high status is involved, except when in the private family and female apartments, make the preservation of privacy, the guarding of the secrets of the heart and mind, an art in whose acquisition special rules and gestures have to be learned. In superficialities the Iranians love change and variety; variety of colour to compensate for the monotony of their landscape; change and newness in the objects of daily use, for old things and buildings are carriers of old evils – on the thirteenth day of each New Year, which falls in the spring, people leave their houses for a day to give the old, bad spirits a chance to go, ousted by what is new and good. Yet deep down the Iranian people are conservative and the effort to retain Iran's separate identity under the threat and actuality of invasion and devastation at alien hands has not been easy, but has been continuous. Therefore, penetration of Iran's way of life by foreigners was, and to a considerable extent still is, the cause of serious concern in the minds of many of the people, especially among the more conservative sections of the community's leadership.

Most Iranians had the tobacco habit and the concession was considered a monstrous assault on the nation's privacy, as well as on its pocket. As for the Aminu's-Sultan, the popular attitude he evoked was expressed in newspaper cartoons showing him aged and withered, sitting over a map of Iran 'meditating the sale of, for example, Azerbaijan'.[1] Iran is a large country and its centres are separated by great distances; sometimes local interests seem in the minds of the people to be of more immediate importance than wider, national interests, though this is a characteristic which modern communications have tended to reverse. The Tobacco Concession, however, touched everybody; not surprisingly, therefore, it excited a unified response from nearly the whole nation. Steamships operated by foreigners on the Karun did not impinge on the nation at large as

[1] See E. G. Browne, *Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*, Cambridge, 1914, where this cartoon is reproduced on page 27 from the weekly, *Azerbaijan*, of 16th March 1907.

this concession did; the banks in the chief cities were more ubiquitous than the plant of some of the other concessions, but they only concerned part of the general population and were, moreover, an undisguised blessing to the mercantile element. In this context it may be remembered that while Dr. Musaddiq's nationalisation of the Oil Industry made, if only for a moment, every single Persian heart beat as one in support of him, his subsequent policy of ridding the country of the British Imperial Bank of Iran excited hostility and dismay among many who had up to this step found his leadership inspiring. But the Tobacco Concession was immediately everybody's concern and it was in consequence extremely dangerous for the very same reason that it must have seemed to its instigators so wonderfully profitable. The nation, faced with this extraordinary imposition, was thereupon faced with the problem of how to make a united protest.

This is where Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din Afghani again comes into the story of Iran's modern struggles. He had not always been acceptable to the clerics, any more than in the end he had proved tolerable to the Shah and the Aminu's-Sultan. The only friends he had kept among the influential classes had been merchants, his host in Tehran, and the Maliku't-Tujjar of Hamadan, Hamadan's leading merchant, who had succoured the sick and ageing Sayyid during the ordeal of his journey under an armed escort on being driven from the Shah's realms. He arrived at Hamadan on the way to Baghdad tied onto a mule, his feet and legs swollen and black with cold. The Maliku't-Tujjar, doubtless with the support of his friends in the bazaar, did what he could to alleviate the Sayyid's sufferings.

There is no evidence of clerical sympathy for this man, who had after all served Sunnite governments and spent most of his life and achieved most of his notoriety in Sunnite parts of Islam – Afghanistan, Egypt and Turkey; it is not to be expected that Sayyid Jamal would win the hearts of Persian clerics. He had criticised them as outspokenly as he had the Shah and the Court. There is, for example, the story of how one day in the presence of Nasiru'd-Din Shah, one of the leading Persian *ulama* having delivered a long disquisition on philosophical matters and been applauded by all present for his eloquence and learning, the Sayyid, putting aside the cigarette he usually had in his mouth, exclaimed, 'You'd better start learning Logic again right from the beginning': not much love could be said to be lost between Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din and the Iranian *'ulema*. Yet the claim stands that it was the Sayyid who more than anyone else coordinated Iranian clerical opposition to Nasiru'd-Din Shah. The very challenge of his superior intellect and grasp of real issues shamed the leading Persian clerics into rethinking their position. They may not

join him or sympathise with him; to them he, a Persian Sayyid as many claimed, was in fact a renegade through his association with the Sunnite schools. But his challenge and influence, his insistent message that Islam was weak and apathetic in the face of changes inspired by alien forces, his theme that Islam could and must awake to combat or shape these changes to conform with the Faith, could not be ignored: he aroused the Iranian clergy in spite of themselves. Then came the Tobacco Concession, Sayyid Jamalu'-Din's fiery reaction to which suddenly put a dagger, poised at the heart of the Shah, into the hands of the mullas and the people.

There had been a number of sporadic, unco-ordinated riots against the Concession before Jamalu'd-Din stepped in. After his miserable expulsion from Iran he had reached Basra, his heart full of bitterness against Nasiru'd-Din Shah; full of a personal animus which serves to detract from any conception of this Sayyid's greatness, but which could not detract from the biting, stirring eloquence of his writing. He wrote a letter to a mujtahid who had at that time supreme influence in the religious affairs of Persia, though residing (at a safe distance) in the Shi'ite Holy City of Samarra in Iraq: the city in which the Twelfth Imam disappeared from the eyes of men to become occulted until the Return, to inaugurate the reign of peace and justice upon earth. To Hajji Mirza Muhammad Hasan-i-Shirazi the Sayyid wrote a letter vibrant with hatred and contempt for the Shah of Persia, and giving the latest news brought from Shiraz by a refugee mulla with whom the Sayyid had compared notes and exchanged grievances when they accidentally met in Basra. On receiving this epistle, the mujtahid issued a *fatwa* making the use of tobacco unlawful in Persia until the Concession should be cancelled.

And now the protests of the people of Iran coalesced, hardened into a single and unbreachable front with the cement of the Hajji's sonorous decree. A situation which in modern times is the nightmare of secular rulers of Iran had now arisen. The nation reacted with astonishing single-mindedness; all the pipes and cigarettes which were such an essential part, as essential as tea, of any Persian gathering or recreation were abandoned, even in the royal household. It was the first lesson in united action against the Shah and his Minister and the Concession was cancelled in January 1892. Nasiru'd-Din Shah never retrieved his position. The clerics had won. Mirza Hasan-i-Shirazi telegraphed congratulations to the Shah on his prudent decision to do away with the Concession. To the congratulations the advice was added that all concessions to foreigners be withdrawn.

The Crown was humiliated, while the people had shown them-

selves capable of united action and the clergy been made aware of what in the arena of politics and public morality the forces of religion could still achieve. Also a foreign power had been defied; the activities of private individuals in the city of London were in the minds of most Iranians indissociable from the activities and machinations of the English Government. Thus the stage was now set for a dénouement which the financial legacy left by the cancelling of the Tobacco Concession made the more inevitable.

Chapter 8

Prologue to Revolution

THE damage to England's prestige occasioned by the fiasco of the Tobacco Concession brought a small gain in favour of the Russians, who had wisely resisted Nasiru'd-Din Shah's suggestion that they should intervene in anti-Concession riots in Tabriz. It made little or no difference that the British Government and people had not been responsible for the Tobacco Concession: in 1892 Iranians did not as a rule discriminate between the acts of individual British citizens and the policies of the British Government or the general run of British sympathies and wishes. After the scandal of this Concession, in Iranian eyes the whole of England was considered blameworthy and the Aminu's-Sultan – whose tenacity and resilience are illustrated by his survival of the scandal – began to manoeuvre for recognition as the friend of Russia rather than, as hitherto, of the British. In this context it is interesting to observe that in 1953 an Iranian prime minister adopted a somewhat different, though equally inaccurate, assessment of the attitude of the British public at large towards a Concession.

Dr. Musaddiq, having nationalised Persia's oil and so nullified the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's Concession, and having virtually refused to come to any sort of terms with either the Oil Company's representatives or the British Government, suddenly bethought himself of establishing some kind of contact with what he vaguely referred to as the City of London – by which he presumably meant British business, to the exclusion of Whitehall and of the oil concerns. Instead of accusing the whole British people of complicity in the sins of the Oil Company he spoke from the outset as if he believed that the majority of Englishmen were in sympathy with him, and accepted his repeated assertion that he had no quarrel with the ordinary people of Britain. When his situation was becoming severely strained financially and economically, about a year before the end of his period in office he and his advisers attempted to make an overture to British 'businessmen', whereby he doubtless hoped for resumption of normal trade relations. Taking into account that one of the ways of expressing 'to come to terms' in the Persian language

is to use the verbal phrase, *bekināŕ āmadan*, which literally means *to come to* (*one*) *side*, it may be supposed that Dr. Musaddiq was adopting an old stratagem of trying to disrupt an enemy's forces by drawing aside one of their components; no doubt his repeated insistence that the British nation should not be damned because of the Oil Company's attitude had been designed with the idea that such an escape as he did in fact attempt, from the impasse which ultimately confronted him, might have to be tried.

The attempt in question bore no fruit but was indicative of yet another Iranian habit in appraising foreign relations, for it was based on the assumption that the British public in general must be profoundly agitated over the deadlock which then existed between the two countries. Though for the majority of Iranians it is very difficult, almost impossible, to suppose or believe that very few Englishmen ever spare Persia a thought (and a great number are far from sure where it lies on the map), in 1953 the affairs of Iran exercised the minds of only a very small section of the British public. To explain this inaccurate assessment of the preoccupations of the island race, it is necessary not only to remember that Iranians tend to live in an Iran-centred world of their own, but also to recall that throughout the modern epoch Iranians have had to watch and speculate so narrowly over British and Russian policies towards their land that they cannot therefore help assuming that Iran must be an equally central factor in the minds of all Russians and all Englishmen. This kind of assumption has been exploited by Iranians wishing to gain prestige and influence among their fellows: since it used to be universally believed that no British Cabinet ever met without some aspect of Persian affairs being on its agenda, it was easy for returned Persian travellers' tales of having had tea with prominent British statesmen also to be accepted, so that in a city such as Isfahan so local a matter as a dispute over the distribution of water might be settled in favour of the party in the wrong simply because the legend existed that he, when he went to London, was received by the highest dignitaries and admitted to the most secret councils.

In Persia social and political success largely depends upon whom a man can come to terms with and what power he appears to be enjoying the support of; while the legend of Britain's influence and effective power to control events in Iran, though now hoary, continues to take a long time to die. It was by no means inappropriate, certainly until a few years ago, to sum up the situation in the story that if a poor woman in Khurasan found a dangerous snake one morning in her kitchen, she would as likely as not think the English had planted it there; and in the year 1963 it was agreed that most

of the high wall which surrounded the British Embassy gardens in Tehran should be demolished, to be replaced by open railings, partly, it must be supposed, in order that neither the Iranian Government nor the British should still be embarrassed by the widespread belief that the walls hid some intangible mystery and that Iranians who were admitted behind them came out with some special authority for use in influencing their compatriots. A story used to be told, and that only six or seven years ago, in Tehran about a man who every morning entered the British compound in the centre of the city, walked thrice round the gardens within and then came out and hailed his friends with a knowing and commanding look, informing them that he had received his 'instructions'. It may perhaps seem incredible, but there was a man in Tehran who for a time enjoyed some notoriety because he used to show people a fountain-pen he claimed the British Prime Minister had given him.

This discussion can hardly be regarded as flattering to the people whose feebleness and folly it reveals, but judgment ought to be suspended here because, for one thing, it is not the purpose of these revelations to mock the credulity of Persians; the purpose is to describe the workings of men's minds in such a way that foreigners, particularly if they be Westerners, who want to understand Iran or have dealings with its people will have an inkling of the contrasts between their approach to problems and the Persian approach. It is for a similar reason that James Morier's famous novel, *Hajji Baba of Isfahan*, is in its way useful reading for the student of Persian affairs; and it is not an easy task to answer precisely either the charge that in its ludicrous scenes the story is exaggerated or the counter claim that, on the contrary, it is a true picture of the Persian character as it was in Qajar times, albeit presented in the frame-work of a picaresque romance.

Examination of Iran's history can at least help the Westerner to understand, even when he cannot condone, certain features of the character of its inhabitants: help him to realise to what a great extent foolishness and misjudgment have been induced in an ancient and refined people by the shock of modern impacts; and help him also to find part of the explanation for Persian conduct in the past deeds of those two Great Powers which have had most to do with Iran's modern development and the trials it has suffered since the early eighteen hundreds. Another part of the explanation lies in a national character formed during centuries when all that was essential for survival had constantly to be shielded from assault, and when accommodation had continually to be made with mighty and blundering conquerors in a manner which ensured that somehow the life of

the nation might continue and the very luxuries and boons that had attracted the conqueror be afforded him; for new masters whose rapacity could be assuaged might in the end learn to show some clemency. The buffetings of history have left a legacy of pessimism and near despair and these at a touch can be manifested in infatuation or arrant irresponsibility; in an idiotic credulity which is the more eagerly resorted to because of the tendency very often to prefer fiction to the facts of reality. This tendency can be ascribed to the wars, pestilence, famine and other disasters that have on so many occasions made facts too horrible to face and recourse to fiction a necessity. One recalls the majestic words of Gibbon concerning the conquests of the Mongols: 'nor can I refuse myself to those events, which, from their uncommon magnitude, will interest a philosophic mind in the history of blood'. He is referring to events which broke over Iran, the country which bore the first shock of them. To say that such episodes in its history have left Iran with a legacy only of pusillanimity is to forget that this history of conquest and massacre, ruin and desecration, has also been the history of subtle accommodation with the conquerors, and of a survival by which the 'philosophic mind' must still be astonished. If on occasions the actions of a people who have so suffered and so survived seem either absurd or unprincipled, forgiveness, for which the grounds are ample enough, is appropriate.

In order, if not to forgive, at least to understand some of the actions of Iranians in recent years, it is necessary to begin with the Constitutional Revolution, if only because this is a revolution which is not yet over, so that for most of the time since it first began, in 1905, Iran has been in a state of, to use Professor T. Cuyler Young's apt words, 'continuing crisis'. Going back a little in time before 1905, two points can be taken up for further examination from what has been said earlier.

The first is the question of the novel, *Hajji Baba of Isfahan*.[1] For the purposes of the present discussion this book can be briefly dismissed as the means whereby the corruption of Qajar Iran was exposed to English readers and, after it had been translated into Persian, to all those literate Iranians whose antipathy to the existing rulers of their country made them avid for fresh evidence of the perfidy and folly of the Shah and his servants. For the Persian version was something more than a translation. It was part of the literary preparation for the coming revolution because, besides

[1] There are numerous editions of this work, of which the best is probably that edited, with copious notes and illustrations, by C. J. Wills, and published in London, by Laurence and Bullen Ltd., in 1897.

containing material additional to that contained in James Morier's original, it was deliberately aimed at Iranian intellectuals and conceived as a means of further awakening them to the abasement from which their country was suffering. As a criticism of conditions in Iran it awakened the anger and shame of the patriot – his anger that the absurdities the book described were unfortunately all too often nearer the truth than fiction, and his shame that this was the picture of his country which had been introduced to foreign readers of the original work.

The second matter which needs further elucidation may be termed the question of 'mystery' – the rumours and the conspiratorial atmosphere which by the closing years of the nineteenth century had reached a peak.

Other historical causes apart, in Qajar times and especially since the Babi holocaust of 1852, and the hardening of attitude and deepening of suspicion on the part of Nasiru'd-Din Shah which came about in that sad year, an efficient secret police and constant watchfulness by the ruler and his minions had served deeply to inculcate the habit of secrecy. This habit had the natural outcome of willingness to believe in all sorts of mysteries and proneness to look for dark allusions everywhere; to assume that what men said was not necessarily what they meant in a world where so many lives came to be lived in the terms of a perpetually unfolding *roman à clef*. Writing about the Babi massacre, the French diplomatist and savant who was at that time in Persia is eloquent on the subject of the 'well organised' police, as early as the year 1852. He also reiterates the absolute impossibility of any action remaining hidden from the eyes of informants and of the authorities; de Gobineau says, 'en Perse rien n'est secret, je l'ai dit deja et je le répète, rien absolument, pas plus ce qui se passe dans le conseil du monarque que ce qui arrive dans les retraites les plus mystérieuses du Harem . . .'[1]

De Gobineau's perfectly correct statement that in Persia no secret can for long be kept holds good today just as much as in the time of which he was writing. Many a Tehran taxi-driver will not find it difficult to answer if asked what happened or, certainly, who was present at audiences given by the chief men of the realm only a few hours before: at ten o'clock in the morning those who want to know, and a number perhaps who have no particular motive, save love of gossip, for knowing, will be able to learn about transactions and visits which occurred at the Palace at seven o'clock the same morning. However, in his emphasis on the publicity with which lives are

[1] Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie central*, Paris, sixth edition, 1957, pp. 261–262.

passed and affairs dealt with in Iran, the French Count omitted to point out how imprecise much of the information that is bandied about can be because of the not infrequent use of the art of invention where the true facts are not available. But in the nature of the circumstances this is not of first importance; what is to the point is the paradox that, while belief in mysteries and great credulity about suspected intrigues are being explained in terms of the prevalence of secrecy characteristic of the thinking and speaking of many leading Iranians in the nineteenth century, nevertheless 'nothing, ... absolutely nothing in Persia is secret'. It is to the manner in which old Persian society and loyalties comprised and were centred upon groups that reference must be made, to account for both the factors exploited in the pre-revolutionary era to promote secrecy, and the system of informants which de Gobineau mentions and which made secrecy so difficult and dangerous.

The nation comprised a number of, as it were, chains of associations: in the towns artisans and master craftsmen were grouped into their various guild associations, the head men of which represented their fellows in contacts with the reigning authorities. Similarly in rural areas, where the unit was, as we have observed, the village, the village headman, the *kathuda*, was in his person the meeting place between authority and the community for which he spoke. The principals in these groupings of the people had to develop a Janus-like complex and their bias naturally depended on their characters and to what extent they enjoyed power for its own sake or were the prey to the promptings of avarice. Katkhudas in the countryside were often exploiters of their communities; the guild leaders in the cities seem on the whole to have been made of a sterner moral fibre and to have tended to let loyalty to those for whom they acted weigh more heavily with them than the prospects of power and gain which those above might proffer in return for acts in their favour.

Nevertheless they could as occasion demanded be referred to to answer for the deeds of their associates and even forced to inform – it seems likely that in the general depravity that took root in Nasiru'd-Din Shah's time these leaders became more venal than usual, an added reason for the formation of the other kind of group we will shortly be discussing. But in addition to these channels of communication between government and people was another and very much inferior type of person, noticed by de Gobineau[1] as a commonplace of Qajar cities – though he presumably has the capital chiefly in mind – and as the main force in the spy-police system. They were called *sar-qismahs*, heads of the quarters or divisions of

[1] Op. cit., pp. 255–256.

a city, and they were directly responsible to the Kalantar, a combination of Mayor and Chief of Police. They lived in the streets of their division, sleeping on the stalls of the bazaar alleys at night and being thoroughly intimate with the movements and habits of everybody in the area. They wore no uniform and, in the shadows of the shuttered bazaar walls after dark or mingling among the throngs during the day, were inconspicuously ubiquitous, and generally, according to de Gobineau, well viewed by the people with whom they lived in such familiarity. This is not as odd as it might at first sight seem, for though they were the government's spies they were also intended to be the protectors of households against robbery and sudden alarm. They have, in narratives in Persian as well as other languages, been treated with far less respect than de Gobineau accords them. Ridiculed as ineffectual buffoons, the inept night watchmen of so many stories from the *Arabian Nights* onwards, their more sinister role of informant has not always had the attention which de Gobineau, explaining the Qajar police system, deservedly gives it.

The effectiveness of this system has been cited indirectly by one great authority on Iran in the Persian section of the Article which deals with Muslim types of association in the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*[1] where the slowness with which the revolutionary movement developed under Nasiru'd-Din Shah is ascribed to the lack of political freedom, lack of a free press and the difficulty of meeting openly for political discussions. Since the functions of the guild form of groupings were stereotyped, and traditionally well established for certain quite specific and socially as well as commercially necessary duties, such as control of pricing and standards of product, apprenticeship, competition and so on, and since their operations were open, they did not lend themselves to political activity; nor would their leaders, it may be supposed, have wished to embark upon anything so hazardous and irrelevant to the aims of the guild. Caution and conservatism may be assumed to have been predominant in groups of this kind. What therefore the intellectually restless and politically dissatisfied did, particularly after the demise of the Amir-i-Kabir when, except for the royal efforts at reform, discussion of progressive measures went underground, was to form private discussion groups to hold secret meetings, at first generally of an ostensibly literary kind, in their houses. Traditionally accepted forms of association were not merely voluntary: they were the stones, so to speak, of which the structure of society was composed. They were the guilds, orders of dervishes, and the *futuwwa* organisations – bands of men who strove to be strong both in social virtue and in

[1] See Article, *Djam'iyya*, Vol. II, pp. 433–436.

arm (the *zūrkhanehs*, traditional types of gymnastic clubs, still to be found in Iran, are an offshoot of this form of association), capable of putting up a champion wrestler for their quarter; and of protecting the women-folk and property of a husband absent, for instance, on business or on the pilgrimage to Mecca. There were also certain recognised factions in some cities, which were no cause of government anxiety because they could be useful safety valves for the passions of the populace.

The *anjuman*, as the pre-revolution kind of semi- or entirely secret association was called, was a new phenomenon. In form it derived something from recognised groupings and in essence it was a manifestation of the Iranian love of discussion and sitting with friends over a pipe with the solaces of tea and coffee. But after 1852 in purpose these anjumans, gatherings, began to take on an increasingly serious nature. The future was discussed, the past either lamented or in certain aspects praised, whichever kind of comparison with the present, which was to be utterly deplored, was being sought. Generally, when, as is most often the case, the Persians are bewailing the present, the past is invested with a golden glow – a late monarch is always better than the present one, or a former dynasty less tarnished as time wears on and an existing reigning house becomes the focus of criticism. After what has been said about the system of informers it will be obvious that these meetings became more and more esoteric. At first, however, they could pass relatively unnoticed and unsuspected: there had been literary associations formed round certain poets as far back as the middle of the eighteenth century, and a British observer noticed a mixed circle of jurists, officers and merchants meeting to discuss religious and literary matters in Shiraz early in the nineteenth century[1] The parallel with circles formed to practice the rules of a Sufi order, with various disciplines, generally performed on Thursday nights, the eve of the Muslim Sabbath, and recitations of the great mystical poets' works, was another factor lulling the suspicions of watchful authorities. Finally, Nasiru'd-Din Shah himself seems to have seen in the organisation of such groups the possibility of drawing the fangs of any serious movement against him: proliferation of different tight little *daurahs*, circles of men who only met with their friends and those they regarded as kindred spirits, could splinter any potentially unified opposition because the various groups might develop rivalries and mutual suspicions. He seems to have thought in terms of setting up a group himself, as witness the extraordinary episode of the *Farāmūshkhānah*.

[1] Harford Jones Brydges, *The Dynasty of the Kajars*, London, 1833, p. cxlviii.

Inevitably, in reading the last few pages many must have thought of freemasonry, and, indeed, the word is decidedly one which can be left out of no discussion of the Iranian Constitutional Movement; the word is there but hardly what most Westerners would consider the substance. Driving Babism underground and out of the country and ridding himself of the great lay reformer, Amir-i-Kabir, were two of Nasiru'd-Din Shah's most fatal errors. With Babism suppressed, and the ancient Shi'ite tradition of *taqiya* or, to give its Persian rather than Arabic name, *kitman*, the sanctioned practice of dissimulation of a religious profession in moments of fear of injury, to be taken into account, suspicion ran riot: nobody knew who was a secret Babi and who not, while the charge of being one could be laid against anybody whom it was desired to traduce. The tendency was for anyone expressing European notions of education and politics to be suspected of the heresy, especially by the religious classes who were, none the less, beginning increasingly to play a dominant role, notably in the various societies and discussion groups that were coming into existence, in debating the political and social issues of the day. The Babis became the whipping-boy for any movement, or initiation in thought, of which the increasingly vigilant and active mullas were not themselves the originators. Yet in the ranks of the mullas and mujtahids themselves there must have been, until a year or two after 1852, some secret Babi sympathisers; it was not until the religious classes had felt their way forward into a position whence to influence the new trends, that furtive glancers towards the heresy could turn their eyes on the gradually formulated new goals of their own class, and cease to contemplate the possibility of the Babi way being the one to follow.

With so much uncertainty and suspicion in the air after 1852, and his growing fear of innovators, Nasiru'd-Din Shah was persuaded by advisers acquainted with Europe that it would be a good idea to have a society whose members had sworn fidelity to him alone. A way to cope with secret sects and associations was to inaugurate one that would be morally bound to him and some form of masonic society seemed to offer the way to do this. Despotism could no longer be sustained by force and on the basis of fear; the Shah needed some kind of sworn allegiance to himself upon which he could rely – this was but a natural response to that isolation we have observed enveloping him. He was advised that if he established a Tehran lodge and made himself its Grand Master, 'he would have the advantage of attaching to himself for evermore the members of the lodge because they would swear to him the Masonic Oath, which can never be broken and, provided he were careful thus to enrol all who

were of the slightest importance, he would find himself by this masterstroke at the head of all the nation's forces, in such a way that none would ever have the power to effect his deposition."[1]

The Shah was at first delighted with the idea and asked everyone he saw whether or not they had been to the lodge and taken the oath. The lodge was called Farāmūsh Khānah, which means 'House of Forgetfulness' literally but which was also coined as an onomatopaeia approximating to the English word freemason. However, the Persians took it to mean that, in accordance with the oath of secrecy they had to swear, they were to 'forget' all that had occurred while they were in the lodge. Hence when the Shah asked them what they had been doing there, they had little to say except that the founder had made speeches and issued ribbons and grades and that they had drunk tea and smoked. Thus after a short time His Majesty began gravely to distrust the new organisation and among his courtiers it was said that the Farāmūsh Khānah was either the scene of debauches or meetings of the dreaded Babis. On 19th October 1861 a notice in the official gazette forbade the organisation. If the Shah had thought to counter revived Sufi assemblies and other forms of association by innovating freemasonry in Iran, he quickly recoiled from the institution he had himself been at first inclined to encourage.

De Gobineau does not mention who the instigator of the idea was but suggests that he had returned from Europe and says that, after the Shah's disillusionment with the scheme, he was forced to go into exile. It may have been Mirza Malkum Khan who, like Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din, had masonic affiliations. Although it appears that British Freemasonry did not recognise Iranian attempts to establish lodges, it is possible that certain masonic circles in France went a little further in accommodating Iranian masonic hopes. That de Gobineau withholds the name of the importer of masonry to Tehran points to the possibility of some special French connection. The freemasonry of Mirza Malkum Khan and of the Sayyid may be partly attributed to their seeking a respectable and non-conspiratorial yet secret association, where people of like mind might meet and establish a bond of trust among themselves as the prelude to wider action for the benefit of the community.

Malkum Khan, a lay man, and Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din, a religious preacher, are two of the most prominent personalities in the process of revolutionary incitement which was gathering momentum during Nasiru'd-Din Shah's last years. Malkum Khan was born in the Armenian quarter of Isfahan, the suburb known as Julfa, but he is said later to have become Muslim and abjured his Armenian and

[1] de Gobineau, op. cit., p. 273.

therefore Christian origin. He rose to a high place in the service of the State as one of the Shah's trusted advisers. He remained alive until two years after the beginning of the constitutional struggle which his propaganda had done so much to promote during the period when, in the same way as Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din had done, he had become one of those the Shah most feared and suspected. He was not only an innovator of political ideas, but also in language and style. He wrote a simple style of Persian which became a model for the new intellectuals, and he coined new words to express modern and European-influenced political and social concepts. One such was *qānūn*, an Arabic word which Mirza Malkum Khan adopted to mean law – in contrast to the word *Shari'a*, the revealed law of Islam. Mirza Malkum Khan, having been sent to London as the Shah's envoy and having had a disagreement with his sovereign over, it is thought, an abortive attempt to arrange a State Lottery Concession in English financial circles,[1] resigned his post and began publishing a Persian newspaper in England which he called *Qānūn*, the first issue appearing on 20th February 1880.

In coining a new word for Law and in making his paper the vehicle for strongly urging that what Iran needed was a rule of law and equality for all men before the law, Mirza Malkum Khan was advocating a new and drastic modification of the old system, in which the Shari'a had predominated, administered by the religious classes; 'Urf, customary law, enabling some classes of decision to be made on the basis of local tradition and requirements, being the only significant concession to the idea of law not based exclusively on Islamic precept. The Shari'a was based on Quranic revelation and the Traditions of the Prophet (and, in the case of the Shi'ites, certain of his progeny), and the anciently established practice of the Muslim Legal Schools. But Malkum Khan, though his newspaper began with an invocation to Islam, was in fact discreetly pointing the way to that complete or very nearly complete secularisation of the Law which has gradually come about in modern times and the apparent necessity of which has been one of the major difficulties confronting Muslim states desirous of bringing their institutions into line with those of modern Western countries.

The fact that Mirza Malkum Khan was not Muslim by birth no doubt made his bold approach to the central problem which was to face later reformers the more easy for him; and he was a contrast to Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din, the seeker for a *Muslim* solution to the social and political problems of Islam. For the great difficulty facing re-

[1] See E. G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, Cambridge, 1910, p. 32 and the present work, p. 96.

formers in the Muslim lands of the Middle East has been the comprehensive nature of a religion which included no principle of dichotomy between Church and State. As we shall observe once again, when discussing Reza Shah's legal reforms and policy of secularisation, however much mullas may have themselves tried to run the revolution, the revolution could never be in their favour because reform of the administration and judiciary of a nineteenth-century Islamic country inevitably entailed criticism, in the first place, of the all-embracing religious institution, and, in the second place, a secularisation that would curtail religion's role as man's guide and arbiter in every sphere of his activity. The difficulty occasioned by the fact that to want to reform the State was in effect to require, either the reform of religious institutions or a limitation of them that portended their ultimate elimination, is one of the prime reasons why Middle Eastern and Iranian political and social regeneration has proved so slow and arduous a process, and has not yet achieved satisfactory completion in the creation of stable systems. The situation in Turkey during the early years of the 1960's is a case in point. However much lay reformers and intellectuals may want to progress and may know what their aim is, the people's religious sentiments must be an inhibiting factor; and the tragedy is seen of a religion which attempted but failed to cater for men's temporal as well as their spiritual needs and which, proving unsusceptible to reform in itself, stands in the way of necessary reform of temporal arrangements. The reformers were not atheists and generally speaking had no desire to destroy religion. They needed the support of populations who were religious people. They were moreover too sensible not to be aware of the depravity which destruction of religion brings in its train: of the truth which Pope uttered when he said,

> *Religion* blushing veils her sacred fires,
> And unawares *Morality* expires.

They were thus faced with the dual task of instituting modern systems of administration and law while preserving religion; and it was only when, in Persia and Turkey, initial revolutionary movements were supplanted by the dictatorships of Reza Shah and Kamal Ataturk that the attack on religion became overt. Then the population could be coerced into accepting the displacement of religion in areas of human activity that spread a long way beyond the walls of the Mosque.

One of the spheres which had always been in religious hands was education and one of the main platforms of the secret societies in

pre-revolutionary Iran, and of writers like Mirza Malkum Khan, was educational reform; education was seen as the way to ensnare the Western 'secret'. Students who had been sent to Europe for higher studies came back with ideas about schooling that were completely novel, and one of whose chief features was sense of the need for science teaching on lines totally different from the medieval science still being taught in the *maktabs* and *madrassahs* attached to Mosques and run by divines. Along with new ideas about education went the production of new forms of literature. The translation into Persian of *Hajji Baba of Isfahan* was only one example out of many, of translations from English and French of romances, (*The Count of Monte Cristo* was popular), and of text-books, while a writer named Talibof, a Persian from the Caucasus, published simple science books in the form of stories a father could read to his children. Notable among literary productions of the revolutionary era was a book that, being a satire on the conditions prevailing in Qajar Iran, was more of the order of *Hajji Baba* than in line with the purely educative essays. It was the *Travel Diary of Ibrahim Beg* and published, like Malkum Khan's newspaper, abroad, first in Calcutta (1905), then followed by another volume from Constantinople (1909).[1]

The intellectuals who had gone abroad came to form a sort of Persian diaspora, in Calcutta, Istanboul, cities in the Caucasus and round the Black Sea, Cairo, London and Paris, and on the shores of Lake Geneva and, later, in Berlin. An official gazette had been published in Tehran from 1851, but under Nasiru'd-Din Shah's nervous despotism, newspapers critical of conditions in the country could not be printed in Iran itself; like *Qānūn*, they began to appear off presses elsewhere, to be circulated clandestinely and read by members of the anjumans in Iran. These were papers like the *Hablu'l-Matin*, which began its life in Calcutta in 1893; *Akhtar*, printed in Istanboul from 1875 to 1895; *Suraya* and *Parvarish*, emanating from Cairo between 1898 and 1899 and during the year 1900, respectively; the *Shams*, another Istanboul-produced paper, founded in 1909, and others in Egypt and further centres of the Persian mercantile and intellectual emigrés. The names of some of these papers are significant; *Hablu'l Matin*, 'The Firm Bond' carries a religious overtone and the sense of strength of purpose, of unity in endeavour; *Parvarish* means education, training for living.

These newspapers were composed with attention to purity of language and directness of communication as well as to their message, of revulsion from the corruption of Iranian society and the wicked-

[1]A third volume later completed the work.

ness of foreign speculators and those traitors who did the foreigners' running about for them in Tehran; and of how all this ought to be changed, good government replacing bad, despotism defeated. Printing had only come to Iran in 1812, when a lithograph press was set up in Tabriz. It was thus a comparatively new toy and it enabled the written word to play its part, side by side with the speeches and comments that were made in the discussion groups, in planning the great change that a growing number of men felt must shortly come. In India, Iranians saw the benefits of security and good administration, while Mirza Malkum Khan was living in London in one of the greatest periods of its history, and was courted and encouraged by British liberals.

He obtained interviews in 1885 with Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, who was also acting as Foreign Secretary. Britain wanted a prosperous Iran and stable government there, but had no desire to press too openly for recognition by the Iranian authorities of the rectitude of the reformers' views. It is interesting the way Malkum Khan used the Russian threat to influence Lord Salisbury, bringing in the need for a strong Iran in Britain's own interests as an effective barrier against Russia. His Lordship agreed and also conceded that 'the corruptions which were eating into the Kingdom and bringing it to decay should be attacked with a firm hand'.[1] The man on the spot, in the person of the British Chargé d'Affaires in Tehran, was not quite so eager to believe in Mirza Malkum Khan, whom he reported as attempting to have the 'paraphernalia of civilization' imposed on a people unaccustomed 'to self-government, or good government, or in some districts any government at all'.[2] However, on 6th October 1891 Lord Salisbury instructed a new envoy to the Iranian capital, Sir Frank Lascelles, as follows: 'If circumstances move you, as well they may, to try and diminish in any respect or instance the misgovernment under which the Persians labour, you should be very careful not to inspire the Shah with suspicion that you have any settled plan for diminishing his power. He has a mortal dread of reform, and of all that may lead to it; and the fear lest measures for the development of his country should issue in the curtailment of his own power, stands for very much in the passive resistance which he has offered most of our attempts to benefit his people.'[3]

[1] R. L. Greaves, *Persia and the Defence of India 1884–1892*, London, 1959, p. 88.
[2] R. L. Greaves, op cit., p. 87.
[3] Cited by L. Lockhart, *The Constitutional Laws of Persia*, Middle East Journal, Vol. XIII, 1959, p. 374.

Here was the other side of that schizophrenic attitude of Nasiru'd-Din Shah, in his later days, towards foreigners; but five years after these careful phrases were put down on paper for Sir Frank Lascelles' guidance, the Shah's worries in this world were suddenly terminated; the way to revolution was opened.

When the Shah's French physician, Dr. Feuvrier, noted in his diary for the 10th and 11th of February 1892 that cancellation of the Tobacco Concession had secured the country's tranquillity, he was being over optimistic.[1] The Shah's truce with his people and the religious leaders was only temporary. In April 1892 compensation for the concessionaires was fixed at half a million pounds sterling. This sum was borrowed from the Imperial Bank of Persia at six per cent interest, which, as one observer noted at the time, imposed an additional expenditure on the country of £30,000, in no way to the benefit of the Persian people. The customs receipts for the ports of the Persian Gulf were pledged as a guarantee for payment of this interest. The capital was repayable after forty years. As E. G. Browne said, a group of British speculators plus 'a handful of traitorous Persian courtiers and ministers'[2] were to blame for putting the Iranian nation more heavily in fee to foreigners than ever before. The nation as a whole was in debt to foreigners through its government, while many members of the nation were in debt to money-lenders and landlords because forced to raise loans to meet increased demands on them.

The interrogation of Mirza Muhammad Reza of Kirman, Nasiru'd-Din Shah's assassin, affords evidence of intense activity among certain of the mullas as well as on the part of Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din Afghani. The latter seems to have been engaging the thoughts of the Ottoman Sultan, 'Abdul Hamid, in plans for an Islamic Caliphate to absorb both the Sunnites and the Shi'ites. Nasiru'd-Din was considered the chief obstacle to this. Mirza Muhammad of Kirman had heard conversations in which Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din had mentioned these ideas. He had also related to the Sayyid the injustices which he himself had suffered from Nasiru'd-Din Shah and his henchmen in Kirman. Sitting with the Sayyid one day in Istanboul and talking in this vein, he had asked Jamalu'd-Din what he was to do. The Sayyid is alleged to have replied: 'A man would seek vengeance.' Mirza Muhammad took this as his cue. He set out for his native land in order to carry out what he thought was an order. On 1st May 1896, just at the time when preparations were afoot for the celebration of the Shah's jubilee, His Majesty visited the shrine of

[1] Docteur Feuvrier, *Trois ans à la cour de Perse*, Paris, 1900, p. 341.
[2] E. G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, Cambridge, 1910, p. 57.

Shah Abdul-Azim, near the ruins of the old city of Rayy, about four miles south of Tehran. The King was fond of outings. It was springtime when the air and flowers in the most beautiful season of the Persian year attract people out of doors for picnics and visits to favourite gardens and shrines. It is said that the Shah had originally thought of going to Shah Abdul-Azim the day before, but the trip had been postponed to the morrow because his astrologers had warned him that the day was inauspicious. It is related that the King was so delighted by the fine weather and prospect of a holiday that on leaving the palace he threw his hat in the air. This stuck in people's memories because the Shah very rarely took his hat off in public. From childhood he had suffered from a disease of the scalp; he was, as the Persians say, *kachal*, scaldheaded.

When the Shah reached the shrine of Shah Abdul-Azim, Mirza Muhammad Kirmani was waiting. He approached him with a petition and shot the King at point-blank range. The Aminu's-Sultan acted with great promptitude and had the Shah's uniformed body sent back in the carriage to Tehran, propped up in a sitting position so that nobody would know he was dead. The clerics passed the blame on to the Babis as far as they could and by inaccurate reporting the European press helped in this. Not that the Iranian clerics would have gone to the extent of murdering the Shah themselves. Mirza Muhammad Kirmani, with his recent association with Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din Afghani, was not representative of them; and they had found in 1892 over the Tobacco Concession that the Shah could be brought to heel in other ways – by a decree from a great mujtahid for example. But his murder provided the clerics with an opportunity too good to be missed of denigrating the Babis; and for various subtle reasons of their own it would have been inconvenient for Sayyid Jamalu'd-Din Afghani himself to be openly implicated.

It was naturally not difficult to inculpate the Babis: ever since 1852 they had been regarded as the arch plotters against the Shah; but it is interesting that the mullas should have been at such pains to ensure for themselves freedom from blame or suspicion, because their sensitivity on this point indicates the extent to which they too had come to be considered opponents of the Shah. It also indicates a desire to keep their cloth free from any stain of ignominy at a time when they knew that events were moving towards a showdown in which it would be essential for the religious classes to embark upon a major role with a clear record; a record that did not include connivance at political assassination. The coming revolution was one in which the religious classes would have to act in the interests of rectifying the evils to which the state had fallen a prey, especially

in the matter of foreign intervention and the sale of Iranian assets to aliens; and in their own interests, to preserve clerical influence whatever new developments might take place; and finally in the interests of preserving some vestiges of the traditional way of life of the Iranian people and some of the old respect for authority.

The last consideration alone would be sufficient to account for the religious classes' abhorrence of the royal murder, and for their anxiety not to be associated with it. The Shah, after all, was a personage whom, and the Throne, an institution which the religious classes sanctioned and suffered to exist until the coming of a higher dispensation; an attack on these objects was therefore indirectly an affront to the religious authorities and it was fitting that heretics should be blamed for it. The immediate culprit was, however, there, in the hands of the government, to be questioned (with a gentleness that was surprising) for several days, and photographed in his fetters before being executed. Meanwhile arrangements had to be made to bring Muzaffaru'd-Din Shah from Tabriz and establish him on the throne.

Muzaffaru'd-Din Shah succeeded to the throne in June 1896, an ageing and ailing man. His poor health was considered to necessitate treatment in Europe and this called for money. Attempts to raise £1,000,000 in London failed but in September, 1898 three Belgians were commissioned to raise money on the Iranian Customs and in the following year they took charge of the Customs Houses of two of the country's main exporting and importing regions, the province of Kirmanshah, near the frontier with Iraq, and the province of Azerbaijan. In this way foreign control of an important area of the administration was introduced and, though they were undoubtedly efficient, the Belgians aggravated the situation further in succeeding years by gradually expanding their jurisdiction over fiscal affairs in general, and by their policy of chiefly recruiting Armenians to work as their local subordinates. But worse in its immediate effects than the appointment of the Belgians was the loan the Shah's government raised from Russia in 1900, when the equivalent of £2,400,000 was lent in roubles at 5 per cent guaranteed by all the Customs receipts excepting those of the province of Fars and the Persian Gulf posts, where British trade predominated. This connection between the loan and Customs receipts had the effect of associating the Belgians in charge of the Customs with the Russians, so that Iranians came to regard the Belgian officials as Russian minions. The loan was to be repayable in seventy-five years and, in order to become Iran's sole creditor, Russia demanded that a loan given by the British Imperial Bank of Persia, in the sum of £500,000 to pay the Tobacco Concession indemnity, be paid off

immediately. These arrangements put Russia in an extremely powerful position in the affairs of Iran and may be regarded as among the factors which had most to do with precipitating revolution. But Muzaffaru'd-Din Shah was not concerned about the jeopardy in which the loan had placed his crown; for him the most important outcome of it was that his journey to Europe could now be undertaken.

Russia continued to exploit her ascendancy and in 1901 a Russian ship appeared in the Persian Gulf with an offer to carry freight, in the first instance free, the prospect being an opening of trade between the Persian Gulf and the Black Sea, regardless of the Persian Gulf's having been hitherto a British preserve. Meanwhile a plague of locusts devastated southern Iran bringing about famine, and yet the same year saw a heavy tax imposed on such necessities as meat. Customs dues had been made uniform *ad valorem* for imports and exports and a road tax on all mule loads had been imposed. Not surprisingly, therefore, the mercantile classes were becoming exceedingly embittered by the Belgian administration of the Customs and popular resentment was fanned against these foreign officials; while by September 1901 the Shah himself began to find threatening letters deposited on his desk. Nevertheless, a second Russian loan was arranged the next year and this time Russia obtained a road building concession in northern Iran. The Shah went on a second journey to Europe and visited England. The nature of the expenditure entailed by these journeys can be indicated by the fact that his hotel bills in Paris amounted to £240 a day. In 1903 riots against new Customs tariffs broke out and were encouraged by influential members of the religious classes. Yet the senior Belgian Customs official, M. Naus, continued to gather departments of the financial administration under his wing. The religious leaders missed no opportunity to arouse antagonism against him. Then certain prominent Tehran merchants were bastinadoed on the pretext that they had put up the price of sugar. About the same time a religious personage in Kirman was bastinadoed on orders of the Governor, whilst religious feelings in the city of Meshed were roused when the Governor of Khurasan ordered his troops to fire on a crowd which had gathered in the precincts of the shrine. These upsets caused the union of the mercantile and religious classes to crystallise and to be directed against the Shah's government and the Belgians. Finally in 1904 a number of leading merchants and dignitaries took refuge in the shrine of Abdul-Azim. This marked the beginning of the revolution, with the Mosque and the Bazaar acting in concord with each other.

Nasiru'd-Din Shah's long reign had effectively continued the Qajar settlement in such a way that the incubation conditions for revolution were assured, while his own attempts at reform, even in their failure, had served to stimulate the sense of dissatisfaction with a state of affairs neither he nor those Iranians who, like the Shah himself, had either been abroad or had some acquaintance with foreign procedures and foreign success could find satisfactory. His reign gave revolutionary forces both the time and the occasion to array themselves and yet the vigorous repression upon which from 1852 he had deliberately embarked prevented those forces acting until one weaker than he should succeed him and the continuity of his personal rule, the hold of his personal *savoir faire*, be broken. Repression of itself served to increase the revolutionary fervour, and after the Shah's set-back over the Tobacco Concession in 1892, the ground was ready for a movement in which the people would fall in behind certain of the religious leaders in a nationalist alignment against the Throne, and against foreigners who influenced it. This was the last and conclusive proof that Nasiru'd-Din Shah had become completely estranged from his people and his own last-minute efforts to try and grasp what men were discussing and planning in their secret conclaves and private discussion groups were unavailing; as much as anything because, by some sense of principle and of mission, which he undoubtedly seems to have possessed, he could not bring himself to agree with their progressive but, in his eyes, premature views. It would be easy to ascribe this to his wish to remain a despot; it is warrantable, however, to ascribe it to his paternal sense of duty as Shah, and his distrust of some of the innovators, not least of the mullas. It is said that very near the end of his reign he secreted himself incognito into one of the quasi-secret meetings, by that time common among religious leaders and intellectuals in his capital and in other cities; and that on returning to his palace he wrote down his reasons for not being able to acquiesce in some of the bolder ideas being put forward. But neither the Shah's sudden renewed and anxious interest in political reform nor the gaudy preparations for his Jubilee were of any use: the Jubilee deceived nobody and assassination terminated the story of Nasiru'd-Din Shah's erratic attempts so to effect reform that Qajar rule might be perpetuated.

Reference has now been made to the alignment of the people and the religious classes, the latter shot through with lay intellectuals ready to avail themselves of the religious classes' influence with the people: but during the late reign another element had emerged, a new 'nobility' had taken shape, of magnates enriched by foreign

commerce, as a result of which they had come to regard landed holdings in a new light; and of tribal lords who had discovered in foreign contacts a new importance for themselves and an hitherto unsuspected access of power. A class of 'great men' had come into being, its components attired in frock-coats and superficially often much resembling Dukes and Marquises elsewhere. This class was to prove itself strong and wily; a new nobility can be much tougher and, where its own interests are concerned, far less idle or nonchalant than an effete old one. This frock-coated band very shortly captured liberalism and put it into a cage; while the band's various members warmed their backs at whichever European hearth seemed the most hospitable. Here was a power, already in existence on the eve of the Constitutional Revolution, that was not to be finally shaken until the land reforms of the present Shah of Iran, between the years 1961 and 1964.

Chapter 9

Revolution

THE habit of taking sanctuary, or, as it is called in Persian, *bast*, exemplifies the Iranians' preference for silent and passive protest. Taking *bast* also indicates the attitude towards government regarded as a protective agent. When government fails to perform the duty thus expected of it, a *bast* is intended to recall it to its proper function. *Bast* was also a privilege of individuals when compelled to seek refuge from the law; mosques were sanctuary for such fugitives and so were the Shah's stables. When the telegraph was introduced, in times of trouble the telegraph offices in cities were resorted to as a kind of *bast*, for it was imagined that the line went straight to the throne of the King, the last refuge of the people in distress. But the *bast* of 13th December 1904 was a very large affair: some two thousand mullas and merchants retired to Shah Abdul-Azim and demanded an ''*Adalat Khanah*', House of Justice, and the dismissal of the repressive ministers of Muzaffaru'd-Din Shah's pro-Russian policy, the Aminu'd-Daulah and 'Alau'd-Daulah.

The request for a House of Justice, to dispense the law fairly and efficiently to all, stemmed directly from the kind of propaganda characteristic of Mirza Malkum Khan's *Qānūn*. The mullas and merchants, headed by the prominent Tehran religious personalities, Sayyid Muhammad Tabataba'i and Sayyid 'Abdu'llah Behbehani, on this occasion limited their demands to a moderate step towards a rule of law; and towards recognition of the people's participation in the selection of ministers, implied in the request for the removal of two unpopular ones. The fugitives returned to Tehran on 12th January 1906 after much negotiating with the Shah and receiving his autograph decree (known as a *dastkhatt*, a note in the Shah's handwriting) promising to grant their demands. On this day the cry *zindah bād Millat-i-Īrān*, 'Long Live the Iranian Nation' was heard, probably for the first time: the Constitutional Movement was not only against autocratic methods of government; it was also against foreign interference and so had a nationalist as well as a democratic motivation, being a move to give some sort of cohesion to Iran and

to revive its dignity and freedom, as well as to cleanse the government and give the people a voice in its affairs. This blending of political and nationalist sentiment has persisted; when Musaddiq nationalised the oil in 1951, it was this combination of aims and emotions that inspired him and the nation.

Muzaffaru'd-Din Shah and his courtiers were ready to go to any length to break up the *bast*. It was an embarrassment to have two thousand people out in protest, many of them men of the first ranks of society. Contacts with the outside world had brought with them awareness of world opinion, and it was damaging to the nation's pride as well as to its internal economic structure to have almost the whole of the mercantile community of the Empire's first city fugitives from the Shah's government. Capitulation to the *bastis* was preferable to continuation of this intolerable situation, especially as it seems that the Shah's advisers, in finally recommending compromise, thought they could rely on his Qajar obstinacy not to fulfil his promises; and so ward off the danger of democracy without loss to the power of that autocracy in which his entourage had a vested interest.

He did not keep his promise and in July 1906 the agitators for reform staged a second rejection of royal government, this time in greater numbers and with remarkable organisation and sangfroid; and with the significant difference that the second *bast* was divided into two groups. Merchants and lay intellectual reformers took sanctuary in one place, the religious leaders in another. Having sought and gained permission from the British Chargé d'Affaires, the secular group, numbering between twelve and fourteen thousand, established a well-run, quietly disciplined camp in the grounds of the British Legation in Tehran – in summer its usual occupants were in hot-weather quarters at Gulhak, a cool spot above the city – and declared their intention of staying in this unusual sanctuary till granted a Constitution. The clerical reformers went in a popularly acclaimed procession to the shrine-city of Qum, ninety-odd miles away. Reluctantly, on his birthday, 5th August 1906, Muzaffaru'd-Din Shah granted a form of Constitution which permitted a representative assembly, opened on 19th August, when arrangements were made for an electoral law to be drafted.

The first electoral law was ready by 9th September, very quick work. It was by no means perfect, but then it was the first attempt of its kind ever known in Persia. To elect a National Consultative Assembly, *Majlis-i-Shura'i-ye-Milli*, it established that voters should be of Iranian nationality, at least twenty years old, well-known in their districts, possessors of property valued at not less than £50,

paying taxes of at least £2 per annum or receiving at least £10 in income. Women, aliens, persons under guardians or not of full understanding, apostates from Islam, bankrupts, criminals, servicemen on active service, were among people denied the vote.

One of the major flaws in the new law lay in the method of election in two degrees. First of all, in cities the different quarters and, in rural areas, electoral divisions were to send forward a certain number of candidates. Secondly, these were to meet and elect the representative from among themselves. This method allowed pressures to be exerted on elections at two different stages. There was bound to be pressure at the first stage on an ignorant and bewildered electorate; in rural areas for example, there was scarcely any chance of local magnates or their nominees not being chosen. At the second stage the wealthy people, and those who could convince their friends that they had powerful backing, from foreign powers perhaps, or from the Court, could get themselves elected. The size of the country and slowness of communications required elections that were phased over a long period of time; or at least they gave some form of rational pretext for a general tendency to delay. Thus time was allowed for manoeuvre and for candidates to gain votes by promises or threats. And, as has been evident in the early 1960's with Land Reform, also in 1906, side by side with the idealists and sincere democrats, were many who accepted the new measures only with the intention of twisting them to their own advantage.

The first Majlis was opened on 7th October 1906, and its first notable resolutions tell their own story: the Constitutional Movement sprang into action because it was felt that the country's assets were all gradually being disposed of by the Government for cash to foreigners. On 22nd November the Majlis rejected a proposed joint Anglo-Russian loan of £400,000. By February 1907 the new Shah – Muhammad 'Ali had succeeded his father on 19th January 1907 – was forced to dismiss M. Naus, the Belgian Director General of Customs.

But the new Shah, greatly influenced by Russian advisers and in particular by a Russian Jew named Shapshal, who had been trained at the Russian Academy of Oriental Studies, showed himself from the beginning antagonistic to the Constitution. As Crown Prince and Governor of Azerbaijan, Muhammad 'Ali had been repressive, and news of the granting of the Constitution had only been conveyed to the people of Tabriz, his provincial capital, through the British Consulate. Thereupon Tabrizi leaders had formed an anjuman, the *Anjuman-i-Nuzzār* or Committee of Overseers, intended to oversee the election of their deputies to Parliament; this important anjuman

was a forerunner of the Tabrizi defence of the Constitution between 1908 and 1909.

Though the Crown Prince had to swear to uphold the Constitution on becoming Shah, he invited none of the Deputies to his coronation. He repeatedly swore fidelity to the Constitution; once when it was first granted; secondly when his father died, and on this occasion, 30th December 1906, he swore not to dissolve the Assembly for two years; and in November 1907, when the Assembly's suspicions of his hostility to it made the Deputies ask him to renew his Constitutional Oath. Nevertheless, on 3rd June 1908 he finally had the Majlis's building bombarded and so put an end to Iran's first experiment in parliamentary procedure.

His fears were excited by the proliferation of those political associations, the anjumans, to which we have already alluded. After the granting of the Constitution and especially with the promulgation of the Supplementary Fundamental Laws of 7th October 1907, under whose Article 20 'All publications, except heretical books . . ., are free and exempt from censorship', publication of newspapers and satirical journals also greatly increased.

Of the plethora of papers which emerged after the granting of the Constitution, *Tamaddun* ('Civilisation'), beginning in February 1907, the Tehran issue of *Hablu'l-Matin* (which in April of the same year began to continue its Calcutta predecessor's work), the *Sur-i-Israfil* ('The Last Trump'), which first appeared in May 1907, and *Musavat* ('Equality'), beginning in October, were outstanding and conscientiously tried to expose abuses and protect the nascent democracy. Other organs, like some of the new anjumans which brought political clubs into disrepute, were less responsible in their methods. Thus the Shah's apprehensions had plenty on which to feed. The press was a many-headed Hydra. To close a newspaper was to defy an article of the Fundamental Law, in which the Constitutional idea had been enshrined. Meanwhile the abuse, mockery and guying in caricatures, a feature of the new Persian press, to which the weak sovereign and his friends were subjected, excited his horror and shocked his religious sentiments as well as his personal vanity. He was of a religious cast of mind, a fact which neither his Russian friends nor reactionary divines failed to use to their advantage. In the end he was driven to take drastic action to restore autocracy.

The papers listed above are of interest to the student of Persian literature because of their editors' and contributors' innovations and consciousness of style. The caricature had its counterpart in the satire. 'Ali Akbar Dehkhuda, who became one of modern Iran's greatest literary figures, a savant and lexicographer, made his name

in these early days of political writing with articles in *Sur-i-Israfil*, in which he asserted the liberal intellectuals' views in satire against the reactionary religious classes and the corrupt minions of the monarchy. He was one of the innovators of a modern prose style in which the idioms and adages of colloquial speech are used and made part of the accepted written language. This was another step forward in the process of literary reform initiated by Qa'im Maqam Farahani and the Amir-i-Kabir early in the preceding century. These men had aimed at reducing bombast.[1] In the early nineteen hundreds, secular authors went further: their aim was to raise the spoken language to literary status.

Muhammad 'Ali Shah's religious grounds for antipathy to the Constitution were supported by that section of the religious classes which had not followed the lead of Sayyids Muhammad Tabataba'i and 'Abdu'llah Behbehani to come out on the side of the revolution. Originally all three of the most influential divines of Tehran had been prominent in the first *bast*; the two just named and Shaikh Fazlu'llah Nuri, but he had soon relented and left the cause. Others were not lacking who refused to accept the idea of sovereignty being vested in the people; Article 35 of the Supplementary Fundamental Law betrays European, and probably the secular, intellectual conceptions of reformers like Taqizadeh, who did much in drafting the *Qānūn-i-Asāsī*, the Fundamental Law. This Article states that 'The sovereignty is a trust confided (as a Divine Gift) by the people to the person of the King'. And yet perhaps it is only in thus clearly expressing it that this notion indicates European influence: the idea it embodies is as old in Iran as anywhere else, if not older. The divergence between lay liberals and their religious comrades, though it might have been prefigured in the second *bast*, when the former, men like Taqizadeh and Dehkhuda, went to the British Legation, and the latter, to Qum, only began to become obvious after the Constitution had been won, and the deputies arrived from Tabriz to join their fellow townsman, Taqizadeh, in the National Assembly.

But the secular members prevented the movement's being weakened by doctrinal differences and drafted into the Fundamental Law the following as its second Article: 'At no time must any legal enactment of the Sacred National Consultative Assembly, established by the favour and assistance of His Holiness the Imam of the Time (may God hasten his blessed Advent);[2] the favour of His Majesty

[1] 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi, *Sharh-i-Zindagani-ye-Man* ('My Life Story'), Tehran, 1324–5/1945–6, Vol. I, p. 60.

[2] The Twelfth Imam, believed to have disappeared in A.D. 873–874 and whose return is expected at the end of time to fill the earth with justice.

the Shahanshah of Iran (may God immortalise his reign), the care of the Proofs of Islam (may God multiply the likes of them),[1] and the whole people of the Iranian nation, be at variance with the sacred principles of Islam or the laws established by His Holiness the Best of Mankind[2] (on Whom and on Whose Household be the blessings of God and His Peace). It is hereby declared that it is for the learned Doctors of theology . . . to determine whether such laws as may be proposed are or are not in conformity with the principles of Islam, and it is therefore officially enacted that there shall at all times exist a Committee composed of not less than five *mujtahids* or other devout theologians, cognizant also of the needs of the time, . . . The *'ulama* and Proofs of Islam shall present to the National Consultative Assembly the names of twenty of the *'ulama* who possess the attributes mentioned above, and the members of the National Consultative Assembly shall, either by unanimous acclamation, or by vote, designate five or more of these, according to the exigencies of the moment, and recognise them as members, so that they may carefully discuss and consider all matters proposed in the Assembly and reject and repudiate, wholly or in part, any such proposal which is at variance with the Sacred Law of Islam. . . . In such matters the decision of this religious committee shall continue unchanged until the Appearance of His Holiness the Proof of the Time (may God hasten his glad Advent).'

Although clerics have found divers ways to influence events since the opening of Iran's first Parliament, this particular Article has remained nothing more than a monument to the religious climate, and a sop to religious emotions, of the time, and of many years subsequent to that time, when it was drafted – as a compromise on the part of the more secularly inclined and as a response in anticipation to the lugubrious objections of Muhammad 'Ali Shah. Admittedly it is correct to emphasise the blend in these affairs of millenial hope and political aspiration; but to impute to reformers, either of the calibre of Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh and of Taliboff, or of the character of the journalists and political 'Jacobins' of the movement, any lack of secular realism and shrewdness of purpose in permitting an Article like Article 2 to be inserted would be to see religion where religion and superstition were absent.

By October 1907, however, the reformers among the religious leaders, whose function in arousing the masses had been so immensely useful, were already too heavily committed for withdrawal to be possible. Those who had followed Shaikh Nuri (who was hanged by

[1] These are the leading Shi'ite *mujtahids*.
[2] i.e., the Prophet Muhammad.

the Constitutionalists on 31st July 1909) were not deceived; the rest had to accept Article 2 and agree to the Fundamental Law in the form their lay colleagues gave it. Shaikh Nuri meanwhile became the centre of the clerical element in the Shah's opposition to the Constitution. The Shaikh was a very learned and quiet man and it has been claimed that his jealousy of the popular adulation of Muhammad Tabataba'i and Behbehani and their preacher friends, Agha Sayyid Jamal and Muhammad Va'iz, made him defect. However, at first his motives were probably of the finest. He doubtless saw the inconsistencies between the new politics and the old religious position. Only later does he seem to have stooped, in all the bitterness of his reaction, to such strategems as charging the reformist divines with Babism and Bahaism. He must be seen as representative of that clericalism which ultimately regards neither the Shah nor the people as sovereign, but which, when confronted with the threat of secularism, upholds the Shah as the sanctioned and traditional institution. In 1963 this attitude was still in existence, though unable to uphold a Shah who placed himself in the forefront of revolution; religious opponents of the Land Reform Acts mentioned the name of Shaikh Fazlu'llah Nuri. His and theirs is a lost cause, but nonetheless his execution was one of the 'excesses' of which the Constitutionalists were accused.

When the Anglo-Russian loan was rejected by the Majlis in November 1907, one of the loan's leading opponents was the great merchant, Hajji Mu'inu't-Tujjar, evincing the strength in the new Assembly of the mercantile classes' representatives. This gesture on the part of the Majlis dismayed both the Russians, hopeful of control of Iran through financial power, and those courtiers who profited from unchecked financial arrangements with foreign powers. Parliament's determination to have a hand in the nation's book-keeping resulted in an attempt to separate the Shah's income from the State's. This further excited Muhammad 'Ali's suspicions and he attempted a *coup*. His Prime Minister, the Aminu's-Sultan, believed to be playing into the hands of the Russians, was assassinated in August 1907 by a person who was identified as a member, a *fida'i* (sacrifice), of an anjuman, a fact which further convinced the Shah of the menace of these societies, whose role in promoting the revolution he probably exaggerated, but whose ambiguous activities after 1906 even a more unprejudiced observer could not view without concern. In 1904 a secret meeting of various discussion groups had resulted in a revolutionary committee of nine being set up, and in 1905 a group called the *Anjuman-i-Makhfi* ('Secret Society') had been formed, of a nationalist and religious complexion. This had

been followed by a second 'Secret Society', dissolved in 1906 when the granting of the Constitution obviated the necessity for secrecy. These bodies had argued against tyranny and against a despot who could be corrupted by foreign powers seeking to intervene in the country's internal affairs. They had drawn up programmes of action. But the revolution had been started by the taking of *bast* by great divines and great merchants; and by the pulpit oratory of preachers under the protection of the leading divines; not by 'action committees' in secret societies, whose role had mainly been to air ideas in discussion. By the time Muhammad 'Ali Shah was haunted by rumours of the threats in which anjumans were indulging, many of them were almost as much of an embarrassment to leading liberals as they were to him. Moreover, his party was using the numerous ill-defined and ill-constituted clubs as a means of vitiating the Constitutional Movement from within. Thus the murder of Aminu's-Sultan was untoward and served only to make the Shah more a prey to those fears his reactionary friends wanted to enlarge in him. In this way they hoped to force him to cancel the Constitution. From 1921 until 1925 his son's predisposition to morbid fear was to be similarly played upon; but that was to force him off his throne.

In connection with Muhammad 'Ali's first overt moves against the National Assembly an attempt was made on his life in February 1908. It is interesting because for the first time in Iran's history a motor-car was involved. A bomb was thrown at the Shah's motor, but as he was travelling in a carriage and not in his car, he escaped bodily harm, suffering only increased perturbation of mind. Likewise, the Russian and British envoys, M. de Hartwig and Mr. Marling, were becoming increasingly anxious at the growth of violence, anjuman activity and vituperation in the press.

The Shah, however, had at his disposal that Cossack force which Nasiru'd-Din Shah had commissioned Russian officers to establish in the spring of 1879, after being impressed by the Cossack escort given him by the Tsar on his journey through Russia in 1878.[1] It was commanded in 1908 by a Colonel Liakhov, and it was he who, with the knowledge of the Russian Commander-in-Chief in the Caucasus and Muhammad 'Ali's acquiescence, shelled the Majlis in June 1908, when the first Assembly was forced to scurry out of existence.

There is evidence that M. de Hartwig would not himself have

[1] For details of the formation of the Russian Cossack Brigade see Professor F. Kazemzadeh, *The Origin and Early Development of the Persian Cossack Brigade*, *The American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. XV, p. 351–363, and also the present writer, *The Last White Russian Commander of the Persian Cossack Brigade*, shortly to be published.

been favourable to such action, but the Colonel was nominally under the Shah's orders, not those of the Russian government, while it seems clear that here was a case of a foreign and intervening power's military taking a course which their diplomatic representatives could not agree to but were too weak to stop.

In the field of diplomacy, the Russian and British envoys in Tehran were officially in accord because of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 31st August 1907. This arrangement divided Iran into three zones without Iran being consulted. An easing of tension between Great Britain and Russia can be considered in the light of Russia's defeat at the hands of Japan in 1905 – an episode that had, along with Britain's humiliations in the Boer War, heartened the Persian agitators for reform – the landing of the German Emperor, William II, and his offer of protection to the Sultan of Morocco, at Tangier on 31st March 1905, and the Anglo-French Entente.

Only some four years earlier, in 1903, had Lord Curzon, as Viceroy of India, made a ceremonial visit to the Persian Gulf and reasserted Britain's position there after visits, dating to 1887, by Russian officers and the arrival of the Russian ship already mentioned, to open trade for Russia in those waters. Curzon's Viceroyalty, from 1889 to 1905, marked a high-water mark in British-Indian suspicions of Russia in Asia. But what Delhi and Simla thought about Russia's operations in Iran were not necessarily the same as what Whitehall thought, and, in any event, with Lord Curzon's removal went his policy. On his return to England he was not in a position to do more than make remarkable speeches in the House of Lords, chiefly against the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. This stirred within his large and painwracked frame cataclysms of wrath and emotion over the fate of Persia and, more particularly, the damage, as he saw it, to the interests of Great Britain.

England's foreign affairs were in the hands of a very agreeable man with a celebrated taste for English wild-life and fly-fishing. Sir Edward Grey had one important idea and was, in the awful event, proved right. His policy hinged on building up amity with Russia in order to isolate the enemy of the future, Germany. He pursued this policy so doggedly that, like poor Curzon in 1921, he was eventually left with no room for manoeuvre, so that when the Russians and the Germans in their turn became more friendly, England was so far committed to a single line of action that all she could do was to reaffirm the entente with France and, as a by-product of this entente, acquiesce in whatever Russia chose to do. Sir Edward was devoted to England, knew little about Europe, did not perceive how Russia would exploit the Anglo-Russian Convention, and seems to have

known or cared practically nothing about the remote lands which the Convention covered. It settled Russo-British spheres of influence in Iran, Afghanistan and Tibet: it established a kind of 'papal division' for Asia.

In respect of Iran, as Curzon pointed out in the House of Lords in February 1908, Britain's interests fared worse than Russia's. The Russian sphere was mapped from the main point of entry into Iran from Mesopotamia, a place called Qasr-i-Shirin. It included Isfahan, Yazd, Tehran, Rasht, Tabriz and Meshed, most of the country's greatest cities, Shiraz and Kirman being exceptions. The Russian zone ended at the Khurasan frontier of Iran at the point where it begins to march with the frontier of Afghanistan.

The British sphere was influenced in its extent by Lord Kitchener's views on how far an army mounted from India could successfully penetrate the country, so that this zone comprised in the main Iran's barren southeastern region. It came no further northwards up the Persian Gulf than Bandar Abbas. Hence Lord Curzon had practical, as well as emotional, reasons for his indignation. The whole of northern and northwestern Iran was in effect assigned to Russia. The whole of the southwest was designated 'neutral', with the provision that both powers might seek concessions there. The policy then in fashion in India was satisfied: at least the Northwest Frontier was safe. The discovery of oil in Khuzistan in 1908 resulted in an effort to prevent Russia interfering in the 'neutral' southwestern zone where the oil was situated. To offset Russian interference here, Britain refrained from intervening against Russian violence, atrocities and domination in the northwest, so that from 1909 until Turkish intervention in the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia virtually controlled Azerbaijan and much of northern Iran beyond it.

The bombardment of the Majlis, and the imprisonment, murder and torture of a number of the liberals, in the King's camp, the Bagh-i-Shah, outside Tehran, failed to extinguish the Constitutional Movement. Instead, a new unity and fresh effort on the part of the democrats resulted. Tabriz proved the bastion which, having by telegraph kept the Majlis in Tehran firmer against royal pressure than it would otherwise have been, and having kept a shrewd eye on the manoeuvres of the aristocracy to win control, now refused to submit to the forces of autocracy and withstood a seige of nine months for the sake of constitutional principles. Tabriz's action spoilt Russia's hopes of restoring rule by one easily influenced individual, in place of rule not in the nature of things widely democratic, but nevertheless rule by committee, by delegates subject to reminders of their

duties by constituents, and less easily controlled or swayed by an outside power. Tabriz from the beginning of the movement showed itself more conversant with democratic procedure and aims than the rest of the country. Its contacts, commercial and cultural, with the West, towards which this city looks geographically, ensured this. Its predominantly commercial role, as a clearing-house for Iranian, Central Asian and even some Indian goods routed to European and Russian markets, ensured the pragmatism of its men's approach to affairs. Finally, leaving aside the controversial ethnological issue, that perhaps the Turkish race of many prominent Tabrizis had something to do with their practicality and high principledness, their decisiveness and courage, three other factors may be considered to have made the Tabrizi stand for the Constitution inevitable and appropriate. They were: Tabrizi orthodoxy; Tabrizi intellectualism and political awareness; and Tabriz's special position as a second political and cultural centre in Iran.

The citizens of Tabriz were appropriate defenders of the Constitution because they could not be tarred with the brush so freely wielded by the reactionaries, including Shaikh Nuri, by which an attempt was made to blacken all constitutionalists as Bahais and heretics. Tabriz was unassailable on the score of orthodoxy in those of its circles who professed to be religious at all. It soon expelled the reactionary religious leaders and enjoyed throughout its ordeal the support of the three influential divines of Najaf, Muhammad Kazim al-Khurasani, Hajji Mirza Husain ibn Khatil and 'Abdullah al-Mazandarani, whose allegiance to the Constitution endowed the cause with a charism, effective in winning over waverers and keeping devout men in good heart. Muhammad 'Ali Shah had sworn and broken the Constitutional Oath three times: the charismatic power of the Crown was irretrievably impaired. He was moreover a tool of a Christian power, anxious to extend its influence at least to the Persian Gulf, if not deeper into the Muslim community, in India and Arabia, as it had already done in the Muslim Khanates of Central Asia. In addition, the Najaf triumvirate saw a perhaps last chance for Islam's legal and political roles to be reasserted in a new regime in Iran.

Tabriz, however, where Iranian Muslims are so strict, was also the home of severe critics of religion, admonishers of the superstitious and ardent modernisers whose inspiration often lay in Berlin, Paris and Cambridge, rather than in eastern cities. The Constitutions of European states were studied in Tabriz. Tabrizi deputies in the first Majlis, like Hasan Taqizadeh, were its political instructors. Tabriz was not on the fringe simply, but itself a centre in the democratic movements then agitating the whole Caucasian region. From the

Caucasion democrats came help and Taliboff, that author of books of simplified modern science for Iranians who had only just heard of modern experiments and laboratories for the first time. He lived in the Caucasus and was one of those chosen to represent Tabriz in the Majlis; although age and distance prevented him getting there. The press of Baku and Batum, of Tiflis and Istanboul, was the multilingual Tabrizi's daily reading; and full of democratic ferment, the study of which now also forms part of the history of another revolution, the Russian. Tabriz knew the Tsar's government: in fighting for Iranian freedom its citizens were also fighting almost unavoidable absorption in the Russian Empire. Many of the names of Tabrizi leaders were those of families who had migrated thither from Iranian cities lost to Russia after the Treaties of Gulistan and Turkomanchai.

The third factor, Tabriz's role as a second centre in Iranian affairs, accounts to a considerable extent for its cultural progressiveness, for in Qajar times it was no ordinary provincial capital. As seat of the Crown Prince it was almost a second national capital and its life was given a special impetus during the governorship of that outstanding Qajar *Vali 'Ahd* (Crown Prince), 'Abbas Mirza, and his Vazir, the Qa'im Maqam Farahani. The facts that lithographic printing was first introduced into Iran in Tabriz in 1812, and that this Prince began the remodelling of the army there, are significant.

Rasht, the provincial capital of another northern province, Gilan, also became a centre for the defence of the Constitution after Tehran had been placed *hors de combat* by the Cossack Brigade. Then the old Safavid capital, Tabriz's commercial rival, Isfahan, came into the struggle.

This introduced a new feature. Delight at the liberals' courage and sympathy for their idealism must not conceal awareness of the ambitions for power that were released in these days of turmoil and the reduction of autocracy. The Bakhtiari tribes of the Central Zagros region, under their leaders, Samsamu's-Saltanah and Zarghamu's-Saltanah, saw an opportunity to reach the capital and assume a powerful role in government. Although in Tehran itself a phenomenon, not unknown in recent Iranian history, had been evinced by Isfahan's Prince-Governor, the Zillu's-Sultan, of being one thing in the capital and something else in his province, the conduct in the latter of this scion of the Qajar House had made him and his family hated by a populace which was in consequence the more ready to embrace the constitutional cause and see the Bakhtiaris in the unusual light, not of a blight on their city, but as its liberators. The Zillu's-Sultan had through his son and with the connivance of 'Azudu'l-Mulk, the head of the Qajar tribe, been intriguing in the

capital against his half-brother, Muhammad 'Ali Shah, on the eve of the Majlis's bombardment. Thus it had almost looked as if this cruel governor were on the side of the democrats, but this was only an example of fishing in troubled waters, and the treacherous Prince was not the people's friend.

Thus on 5th January 1909 the population of Isfahan welcomed the Bakhtiari chiefs, who gained control of the city. Meanwhile the plight of besieged Tabriz was extreme. An American schoolmaster, H. C. Baskerville, and a British newspaper correspondent, W. A. Moore, joined the nationalist democrats (the *Milliyūn*, Nationalists, was the style the Tabrizi fighters had adopted for themselves) in efforts to open a road for the entrance of provisions, and Baskerville was killed.

He died on 21st April 1909, the day after the position of foreigners resident in the starving, battle-scarred city had afforded the Russians an excuse to send in troops under General Znarsky, ostensibly to facilitate provisioning the place and 'protect' foreign consuls and subjects. An additional force, disproportionately large for these tasks, entered Tabriz ten days later.

The Shah, urged by the British and Russian legations, now swore allegiance to the Constitution for the fourth time on 10th May, but this gesture did not deflect the Constitutionalists from their determination to seize the capital. An army from Rasht took Qazvin, ninety-two miles west of Tehran on the route thence to Baghdad, to Tabriz and to the Caspian port of Enzeli (now called Bandar Pahlavi). Then the Rasht leaders, Sipahdar-i-'Azam and the Armenian soldier, Ephraim Khan, were able to meet the Bakhtiaris advancing from the south at a point a few miles to the southwest of Tehran. After this union of forces the city was lost to the Shah.

A Russo-British effort had been made to persuade the Bakhtiari leaders not to advance on the capital. British policy, in conformity with the spirit of the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention, seems to have been to play the lynx to the Russian beast – who is, however, in modern Iranian mythology, a bear, not a lion. Perhaps it was an instance of a consular official allowing personal sympathies to overcome official decorum, or perhaps the story, heard from one of Zarghamu's-Saltanah's henchmen, is fiction, but it is said that the Englishman encouraged the Bakhtiari leaders. He and his Russian colleague presented their government's warning of displeasure if the advance were continued. When they reached the door to leave the presence of the considerably perturbed Bakhtiari leaders, the British official remembered that he had left his cigarette case. Returning for it, so the story runs, he whispered, 'Go to Tehran and be assured.'

The arrival of the Bakhtiaris – tribesmen in the Qajar capital at last! – was not a day Tehranis were to look back upon with enthusiasm, although *The Times* and other sources praised the 'restraint' of these strange champions of the Constitution, the Persian word for which, *mashrutiyyat*, it is said they had difficulty in pronouncing. Volumes from the Royal Library still occasionally found in Bakhtiari hands would indicate that the tribesmen did not entirely act out of character in the warm days of July 1909.

On 16th July the Shah fled to the Russian Legation. He was deposed and his twelve-year-old son, Ahmad, proclaimed Shah with 'Azudu'l-Mulk, the head of the Qajar tribe already referred to, as Regent. On 28th October a sufficient number of Deputies had reached the capital for the reopening of the National Assembly; sixty-one were required out of a total of one hundred and twenty to form a quorum, and on 15th November 1909 the Second Majlis was inaugurated; the 'Lesser Despotism', *Istibdad-i-Saghir*, as Muhammad 'Ali Shah's brief suspension of the Constitution was called, was ended.

Chapter 10

Readjustment and Foreign Advisers

Colonel Liakhoff, the officer in command of the bombardment of the Majlis, had failed: the National Assembly was reopened after the Colonel had wisely departed from Iran on 4th August 1909. The Russians and British negotiated Muhammad 'Ali Shah's deposition, covered by a Tripartite Protocol concluded on 7th September, ensuring the exile £16,660 a year and giving the guarantee of both Powers that he would be restrained, on pain of forfeiting his pension, from all political agitation against the people of Iran. The monarch, whom the Iranians generally refer to as *Mirza*, Prince, not as Shah, a title his refusal to abide by the Constitution made illegal for him, went to Odessa. Russian troops, however, did not leave northern Iran; they made the disturbed conditions the excuse for remaining.

Rahim Khan, who had been one of the ex-Shah's leaders against the stand for the Constitution in Tabriz, revolted in August and was captured by the Russians who then released him on ransom, so that he was again able to attack the Azerbaijan city of Ardebil and thus give the Russians a pretext for sending more troops into the province. Next the Constitutionalists in Tehran, where they were once again trying to control the affairs of the country, were forced to equip an army, a drain on exiguous funds, in order to meet Rahim Khan's threat to march on the capital in favour of Muhammad 'Ali Shah. Ephraim Khan was, however, able to beat him, whereupon the Imperial Russian Government, ignoring the purport of Article 14 of the Treaty of Turkomanchai, gave him refuge in Russian territory.

The Russians also fostered dissension against the new Constitutional Government by adopting an ambiguous attitude towards another rebel in Azerbaijan, one Darab Mirza; and on the 28th July 1911 they 'rescued' a former governor of Ardebil whom the Majlis wished to impeach for treachery. But more important to the Russians than these pin-pricks against the new Constitutional Government was its financial weakness. This could, of course, be exacerbated by the activities of men like Rahim Khan and Darab Mirza,

for they necessitated the maintenance of men in military service and kept the country distracted.

By December 1909 the expenses occasioned by the continued state of unrest forced the Majlis so far to go against its principles as to seek an Anglo-Russian loan of £500,000, but the second National Assembly soon showed its mettle when it rejected, as damaging to national dignity, the terms upon which the two powers were prepared to negotiate. Instead recourse was had to a private firm, Seligmanns of London, in an effort to raise money on the Crown Jewels, which a French jeweller was said to have valued at £750,000. It is painful to record that these negotiations were stopped by the intervention of the British and Russian governments in October 1910.

Eventually on 23rd October a protest meeting was held in Istanboul against Anglo-Russian tyranny over Persia, and an appeal was addressed to the German Emperor as 'the only European monarch animated by friendly feelings towards Islam.'[1]

In spite of the undertaking that he should be restrained from political activities, Muhammad 'Ali's Russian hosts seem to have done nothing to interfere with their guest's activities and in October 1910 Iran's new and European-educated Foreign Minister, Husain Quli Khan, was apprised of his making contacts with the tribes in northern Khurasan, east of the Caspian Sea. Husain Quli protested to the two Powers and, as he was entitled to do, under Article 11 of the Protocol regulating the abdication, if the ex-Shah was guilty of conspiracy, withheld the exile's pension. The utter contempt shown by the Powers for the Government and people of Iran (about whose 'pride' so much was heard during the reign of Reza Shah in the 1930's) was revealed when they had the Foreign Minister dunned by bailiffs for the ex-King's pension instalment. He was followed about by men from the Russian Legation and then asked by the Russian Minister to apologise for an alleged insult to a certain Aqa Hasan, the Russian Consular Agent in the city of Kashan. The humiliated Hasain Quli Khan resigned and Iran suffered the withdrawal from her affairs of one of the abler and most patriotic men of the Constitutional period.

By the Potsdam Agreement – that friendly understanding arrived at between the Russian and German Emperors on 5th November 1910 to which we alluded in connection with Sir Edward Grey's policy dilemma – Russia was able to neutralise any move the Kaiser

[1] E. G. Browne, *A Pamphlet on Recent Events in Iran*, privately published in 1912 and also forming part of the introduction to an unpublished manuscript, *Letters from Tabriz*.

might have meditated after being acclaimed the champion of Islam. This Agreement gave Russia, among other things, German recognition of the Russian sphere of influence in Iran as defined by the 1907 Agreement with Britain. Thus Russia was free to exploit this arrangement to the utmost; Britain, tied by her entente with France and her rapprochement with Russia, could do little about the accord now reached between the Slav and the Teuton. Meanwhile, in October the British protested to the Iranian Government about the insecurity of roads in the southern districts and suggested that, as Tehran was apparently impotent, she would herself have to undertake the subduing of the southern tribes. The expenses for this operation would, however, be chargeable on the Iranian Government's Customs receipts.

Great Britain has always endeavoured to keep its dealings with Iran on a strictly legal footing. Security was, it could legally be claimed, the responsibility of the Iranian Government. It was essential for trade, and the merchants of Yazd, Kirman and Shiraz looked to India for their commerce and might also expect protection thence if their own government failed to provide it. Furthermore, Britain now had to consider protecting the development of the Oil Fields with their pipelines to the Persian Gulf. If the Iranian Government could not act, then Great Britain was justified in shouldering yet another of those burdens which her imperial responsibilities brought in their train. At the same time it could not be gainsaid that some sort of discreet balancing of Russia's virtual occupation of parts of northern Persia would be convenient: on 13th July 1909 Sir Edward Grey himself had been forced to confess to the House that Russia had 4,000 troops in Iran.

In February 1911 two assassinations occurred and their aftermath again demonstrated the Russian attitude towards the Constitutionalists. On 1st February there was an affray in Isfahan. The Governor's life was attempted and his cousin killed, but the assassin found refuge in the Russian Consulate. Five days later a more impressive assassination occurred in Tehran when the Minister of Finance, Saniu'd-Daulah, was shot by two men of Georgian extraction. The ill-fated Saniu'd-Daulah was trying to negotiate a loan and had proposed a bill to tax sugar – a Russian import – while he was also suspected of being pro-German. His murderers were incarcerated in the Ministry of Finance but fetched out the next day by a minor official of the Russian Legation, helped by an escort of cavalry. They were sentenced to death, but their Russian protectors insisted on their extradition to Russia where, it was promised, the sentence would be carried out. The death of this sincere and patriotic Minister was a

warning of what could await anyone who tried, under the auspices of the second National Assembly, putting the country's finances in order. The incident might have been particularly poignant for the American gentleman, Mr. W. Morgan Shuster, whose contract for employment to reorganise Iran's financial structure was approved by the Majlis on 2nd February 1911. Arrangements for his engagement had been started in Washington in December of the preceding year.

In spite of these warning ripples and repeated set-backs to the establishment of stability, the Constitutionalists still felt that they were embarking on a new period of hope under a new Regent, Nasiru'l-Mulk. He was an enlightened man, a graduate of Balliol College, Oxford, but very timid. His record as a liberal was sound and he had been Prime Minister on behalf of the first National Assembly. Muhammad 'Ali Shah's first *coup* against the Assembly had, however, resulted in Nasiru'l-Mulk's bearing the full force of the Shah's displeasure. He had been imprisoned and put in chains on 5th December 1908 and it was probably only the British Legation's prompt intervention that saved his life. This occurrence seems to have left its mark on his character: he lived in mortal dread of civil disturbances and violence, and he was hardly the strong man of which Iran stood in such great need. But the cautious demands he made before assuming the Regency were not all ascribable to fear. For one thing he insisted on dividing the National Assembly into parties. He was doubtless imbued with the British example of a Government Party and an Opposition, but there was more to his anxiety to have political parties, *within* the Assembly, than this. The terrorism in the capital that extremists had exercised through the *anjumans* could, he no doubt calculated, be prevented from recurring if the extremists, who dubbed themselves Democrats, were shown to be in a clear minority in a Parliament properly organised into parties; for there were only some twenty Deputies in the ranks of the Democrats in the Assembly.

During and after the great battle for the Constitution which had been waged against Muhammad 'Ali Shah, various political groupings had emerged. On the extremist side were the *mujahiddin*, the guerrilla fighters whose ranks were stiffened by democrats from the Baku oilfields, and whose role in saving the Constitution had been so conspicuous in conjunction with the democratic elements in Tabriz. The Bakhtiari domination of the capital after 1909, however, left these men disappointed with the slow pace of liberalisation of the country's affairs and they found, in the prevalent instability, plenty of scope to perpetuate crisis conditions, and ample pretext for

continuing to bear arms. With rumours of Muhammad 'Ali Shah's plots to regain the throne and constant alarms of treachery among the citizens of Tehran, the *mujahiddin* and the parliamentary Democrats remained in a state of ferment which occasioned anxiety to all who longed for peace and a return to normal. Tehran rang with shots night after night and members of the other important group to emerge, the '*Ittidali* or Moderate Party, were individually subjected to threats of murder.

The Democrats, with their potentially embarrassing support from the *mujahiddin*, were to some extent justified in sensing that, after all their efforts during the 'Lesser Autocracy' from June 1908 to the autumn of 1909, control was now slipping back into the hands of the nobility and being grasped also by a bunch of Bakhtiari tribesmen and their Khans. At the same time the Democrats were too small in numbers to arrest this process – the majority wanted an end to revolution. All that was happening was that the Democrats' agitations played into the hands of Russia, interested in keeping the country in a state of disorder, and made it impossible for Ministers or members of the Majlis to live in safety or to conduct the business of government and address themselves to reforms.

It was probably realising this that Taqizadeh, one of the leading Democrats, seeing that demagoguery had raised a monster, suddenly left for Europe. His departure left the Moderate Party in the Assembly with the advantage, and Nasiru'l-Mulk was able to form a government from this majority party with the Sipahdar-i-'Azam, who had led the Constitutionalists from Gilan to join with the Bakhtiaris, as Prime Minister and Minister of War. The rival banners and the demonstrators were now banished from the streets of Tehran and shots no longer disturbed the night hours. This did not mean the end of the Democrats' factionalism by any means, but they henceforth adopted different tactics; tactics that were a short time later to involve Mr. Shuster, the American financial adviser.

Morgan Shuster's visit and work in Iran was the first attempt by an independent United States expert to assist in restoring the Persian finances, and he was the predecessor of Dr. Millspaugh, who spent two terms in Tehran, once under the reign of the last Qajar and the beginning of Reza Shah's, and again during the Second World War. In a sense Shuster was also the precursor of a later very large-scale American involvement in Iran's affairs; though while he was independent of the United States Government, being employed by the second Majlis of Iran, and was concerned only with finance, later United States commitments were directed from Washington and embraced a wider field of activity.

The first United States diplomatic mission was that of Mr. J. G. W. Benjamin in 1883. Benjamin was the son of an American missionary in Turkey and his appointment as Minister to Tehran was due to agitation in Congress on behalf of American missionaries who, following a preliminary probe by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missionaries in 1831, had gone out in appreciable numbers to Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. Congress passed a bill appointing a Consul and Chargé d'Affaires to Iran in 1882 and it is against this missionary background that both America's first diplomatic contact with Iran and Mr. Shuster's work there have to be considered. Iran wanted to involve a third power in its affairs and one which was not tainted with the imperialism of Great Britain and Russia; but it was also respect for American integrity, as they had known it in missionary doctors and teachers, that attracted Iranian liberals to the idea of inviting an expert from the United States. Mr. Shuster was regarded as a saviour who came from a land which had itself thrown off a tyranny that had been financial as well as political. On his arrival in Tehran his house and garden were crowded with hopeful Iranians of every class and creed. The majority of them naïvely craved a panacea for their ills and the ills of their land, but there were others less innocent who were watchful and not so trusting. Among them were the Bakhtiari Khans, who could not be completely free of thoughts of capturing the nationalist cause and achieving dominion for themselves.

Against the Bakhtiaris, on whose strength the Moderates depended, were the Democrats, primed to take advantage of the newly arrived expert's gullibility and of his democratic sympathies. They quickly began trying to promote discord between him and the 'Ittidali Ministry, the Moderates, which he had been commissioned to serve. Unfortunately Shuster's French was far from perfect and the ranks of the Democrats included a few plausible English speakers who were, as 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi tells us, soon able to influence him.

The Bakhtiari leaders, Samsamu'd-Daulah and Sardar Asad, only commanded tribesmen to the number of two thousand, but their political weight was not in proportion to this relatively small number of men because they were tribal Khans, popularly imagined to have huge resources of manpower in their native mountains and historically feared as ruthless men who, once within the pale, must be appeased by all means possible. The Democrats had played on this fear of the Bakhtiaris, and indeed their arrival in Tehran as liberators two years earlier had caused a panic not lessened by the desire of most of the people to be rid of Muhammad 'Ali Shah. Many families had put out Russian flags in an attempt to avoid having

their homes looted, and larger property owners had entered into complicated leasing arrangements with the Russians or their protégés in the hope of saving both their possessions and their lives. It is in details of this kind that the manner in which foreign influence penetrated into the lives of quite ordinary citizens may be gauged. It was in this way that Russian claims, that they *had* to offer Iranians military 'protection', received support from Iranians themselves, for whom the choice has often been between enemies at home and those abroad.

Returning to the theme of political alignments after the restoration of the Constitution, after 1909 the reformist, nationalist activists, be they Democrats or Moderates, chiefly comprised lay intellectuals and old-established families, the former supported by *mujahiddin*, the latter relying on the Bakhtiaris with the alternative strength of the Sipahdar-i-'Azam and his comrade in arms, the Armenian of Turkish origin called Ephraim Khan. Ephraim Khan became the Chief of Police when Sipahdar-i-'Azam assumed office as the Moderate's Prime Minister, and it was Ephraim's prudence and courage that won the day when Muhammad 'Ali Shah finally made his bid to regain the throne. It might be asked where, in this new alignment of forces, did the clergy and the merchants stand. The religious classes were quiescent: the Bakhtiaris were not religious and the temper of the new Majlis was decidedly secular. The merchants might have been expected to support the Moderates who were in power, but as it happened they were more prone to sympathise with the Democrats and this was probably due to antipathy to the Bakhtiari backing behind the Moderates. The bazaars of Tehran were, until Nasiru'l-Mulk's temporary settlement, the scene of confusion instigated by the Democrats and, whether they wanted to or not, the bazaar merchants were compelled to take the Democrats' part.

For, aside from antipathy towards the Bakhtiaris, all that the merchant probably wanted was to keep his business premises, his *mahal*, intact: he was vulnerable to intimidation by hooligans posing as Democrat supporters, and he probably took the line of least resistance, hoping for better days to come. There is, however, one other point to be considered: the bazaar merchants in Tehran, as in Dr. Musaddiq's time forty years later, showed themselves opposed to what can for convenience be called the Establishment, and, with Muhammad 'Ali Shah's departure, this became equated with the Regent and the Party he favoured, the Moderates. The bazaar had its own ancient traditions and had been left out of the developing administrative 'civil-service' class of Qajar times, so that it had no

ties of community feeling with the new *noblesse de robe* which the Qajar dynasty had fostered. It was the Tehran bazaar merchants' counterparts in Tabriz who financed the Democrats in their fight for the Constitution and for the freedom of Azerbaijan in 1908–1909. And it was a prominent Tehran merchant, a Zoroastrian named Arbab Kaikhusrau, who was among Mr. Shuster's first callers when he reached Tehran. Shuster had interviewed Taqizadeh in Istanboul and it is possible that men like Arbab Kaikhusrau continued implanting the Democrats' point of view in his mind after he arrived in the Persian capital. 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi, a close but impartial observer, complains that it was to this point of view that Shuster from the first showed too great a deference.

Without going too deeply into investigation of the dispositions in Tehran on the eve of Shuster's arrival, though reference to them is essential in view of future alignments, it must also be observed that there has been for many centuries in Iran some antipathy between Turk and non-Turk. In reading even so plain and objective an account of the situation in 1911 as 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi's *Sharh-i-Zindagani-ye Man* ('My Life Story'), the sense of this latent hostility is evident. The Democrat party was chiefly sponsored from Azerbaijan, chiefly on an ideology promoted by Tabrizi 'Turks'. Many in Tehran, however much in favour of the Cause they may have been, disliked the airs of arrogance and knowledgeableness which the Tabrizi Deputies assumed by virtue of their city's gallant stand and democratic awareness. Doctrinal positions apart, Tehran was in any event likely to be jealous of Tabriz's 'democratic' ascendancy.

The *anjumans* had fared ill during Muhammad 'Ali Shah's 'Lesser Autocracy'; his fear of their political theories and outspoken utterances had ensured that when he could, he had his revenge on them. After the restoration of the Constitution, therefore, there was a tendency to avoid use of the word *anjuman* when patriotic men desired to form a club or society. Hence when a man like Muhammad 'Ali Furughi, whose name will be met in other contexts, combined with friends to establish an Educational Society, it was called the *Sharkat-i-Farhang*, the 'Education Association'.

This was in an effort to widen the scope, in preparation of the young for state careers, of the now over sixty-year-old *Dar al-Funun*, Academy of Sciences. The latter had catered for sons of the well-to-do. The new organisation supplemented this by reaching a wider and less wealthy class of boy. It ran classes on the Sabbath (Friday in Muslim Iran) and in the evenings, both at seminar and elementary level. Its founders formed a committee chosen by election among themselves, and contributed to the building of a school and its

subsequent maintenance, until it was later taken over by the State as one of Iran's first state secondary schools. One of the Education Association's rules was non-participation in politics: the lesson of the anjumans and the excesses of the Democrats had made a deep impression on the minds of these Moderates, who were in effect trying to create a new order of society to ensure future stability. At the same time classes for adults were also started.

In the post-Muhammad 'Ali Shah epoch, attempts were likewise made to promote a new literature. One of the seminar activities of the 'Association' was the translation and performance of drama – a genre new to Persian literature in the European dramatic form, and much believed in by the reformers for its educational value.

These efforts accorded with the battle being fought, particularly in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to ensure a role for the young; for those who had already been educated in the Dar al-Funun's political science classes.

The limitations of the first period of the Constitution are indicated by the fact that the reins of government remained in the hands of the same notables who had held them under Nasiru'd-Din Shah. The first Majlis had endeavoured to make Ministers responsible to itself and to exercise a voice in their selection. The ministerial personnel had not, however, changed. On Muhammad 'Ali Shah's deposition, elderly ministers managed to survive and already the problem of an over-staffed but inefficient civil service existed. Reactionary Ministers offered their sons and supporters civil service salaries in various ministries, regardless of whether they fulfilled any function or not. The bureaucracy continued to be a family affair and one of the problems irritating the Democrats, and facing Morgan Shuster as financial organiser, was already that of paying salaries to a host of men described as 'awaiting service' (*muntazir-i-khidmat*).

Some of the nationalists, with the co-operation of one or two of the more enlightened older Ministers, attempted to introduce men into the administration on the basis of merit and ability, rather than on family grounds. The one ministry they succeeded in penetrating most successfully was the Foreign Ministry. This was of great importance as the government agency confronting Russian and British diplomatic pressure through their respective Legations in Tehran and Consulates in the provinces, to meet which trustworthy officials had to be appointed. The state of the times is reflected in the fact that for the Iranian government the selection of its Foreign Office representatives in the provincial capitals, where the two Powers had Consuls, was almost more important than selection of Embassy staffs for capitals abroad.

Some attempt was also made to reorganise the Ministry of Finance. On the eve of Shuster's arrival it was discovered that no proper regulations or office organisation for this department of government existed. The financial business of the country had been in the hands of a small number, only about a score, of officials called *Mustaufis*, revenue receivers. Their duties and specialised knowledge of the tax regime had tended to pass from father to son. The Qajars had not been averse to appointing lateral members of their family as *mustaufis*; relations by marriage with *mustaufis* had been contracted; Musaddiqu's-Saltanah, later the celebrated Prime Minister, related on his mother's side to Muzaffaru'd-Din Shah, began his career at sixteen or seventeen as *Mustaufi* for the province of Khurasan. Mu'tamidu's-Saltanah, also related to the Qajars and the father of two other statesmen with prominent roles in recent Iranian history, namely Vusuqu'd-Daulah and Qavamu's-Saltanah, was likewise of the ranks of the *mustaufis*; when Shuster arrived he was in charge of the *istīfā* or revenue collection of the province of Azerbaijan.

The *mustaufis* were by and large incorruptible. Their chief blemish was intense conservatism and unaccountableness; the latter a grave factor in revenue officials, while their conservatism militated against any improvement in the taxation system. The failure of revenues to reach the government in amounts proportionate to expenditure requirements was not so much due to malpractices on the *mustaufis*' part as to want of revision of assessments and the abuses of powerful notables who, merely to avoid outright rebellion, generally compounded with the government, often over the *mustaufi's* head, for a sum in settlement of taxes and much less than what was due. Outright refusal to pay anything at all was tantamount to a declaration of war against the government. As no sense of contract existed between governor and governed, the risk of bloodshed was never far removed from revenue collection, although under the Qajar settlement it was generally avoided by some mutually convenient arrangement. Meanwhile, with government pursuing the policy of appeasement of the grandees, the latter nevertheless extracted their dues for taxes from the people, whose lot worsened accordingly.

The *mustaufis* used a private notation system in their accounts called *siyāq*, which literally means 'sequence' or 'flow', as of a conversation. It recorded the figures in an abbreviated Arabic notation derived from the Arabic names for the numerals. In early Islam the government accounts had been kept in the Pahlavi numbers of the Sasanid Persian empire. For the benefit of the Arabs, who did not

know Pahlavi, each number had been described underneath by its Arabic name, written out in full. When during the reign of the Umayyid Caliph of Islam, 'Abdu'l-Malik (A.D. 685–705), Pahlavi was dropped, the Arabic words remained. These, reduced to a kind of shorthand, persisted as the *siyāq* notation, still used and understood by older people.

The system was convenient and is not in fact difficult to master. Nevertheless, in addition to the *Mustaufi's* habit of keeping their records in small private note-books which no one, including the government, claimed the right to see, its use gave the *mustaufis*' calling an esoteric air. However, before Shuster's arrival, the operations of the Belgian Customs officers since 1899 had introduced modern book-keeping to Iran, and one of the last-minute reforms in the Ministry of Finance before Shuster came was the conversion of government accounts at the centre from *siyāq* to double-entry and numerical book-keeping.

After the restoration of the Constitution some attempt at reform of the Finance Ministry had been made by Vusuqu'd-Daulah, but had chiefly resulted in the creation of offices and jobs for relatives and had left the old *mustaufis* to carry on as before, surrounded by a crowd of new recruits to the bureaucracy who did little but add to the government's salary bill. A French financial expert, M. Bizot, had been in Tehran two years before Shuster, but had spent his time trying to find out how the system worked and had left no positive impression.[1]

With the drawing up of office regulations just before Shuster's arrival in May 1911, eight departments were established of which five were related to tax zones; Fars and the Persian Gulf ports, Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, Gilan, Mazandaran and Gurgan, Khuzistan, Burujird and Isfahan, and the Central Region of Tehran, Qum, Saveh, etc.; and three required for the headquarters organisation. For the latter a General Accounts Office was established to clear all business, with a central department for disbursement of moneys claimable on government receipts, pensions, etc., and a third department which had been innovated by the first Majlis to investigate revenue abuses and incongruities. The office for disbursements of sums claimable on government receipts was a relic of the days when pensions, salaries and bonuses had been met under the Autocracy by the issuing of cheques on the Treasury. These central offices were shrewdly subjected to little change before Shuster's arrival because it was felt, rightly as events showed, that they would be eradicated by the new adviser – with the exception of the General Accounts

[1] 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi, op. cit., p. 461, and Morgan Shuster, op cit., p. 66.

Office, which was in effect the Directorate General of the Ministry and the closest of the Iranian-directed departments to Shuster's own office. This department, with 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi as its Director, in fact moved into Shuster's house in the Atabak Park, now the U.S.S.R. Embassy in the centre of Tehran, where he had his headquarters.

The first National Assembly had attempted investigation into the tax regime and had reduced some of the pensions and grants to individuals made by preceding governments; had made extra expense levies, raised hitherto by local governors, part of the normal tax assessment; had abolished the system whereby the sovereign had granted crown land or even the revenue of certain areas in lieu of salary, a system called *tuyūl* and much practised by the Qajars; and had abolished the now outdated conversion rates whereby tax estimated in kind had been converted into cash from the late 1870's.[1]

These institutions recall the Qajar attempts to bring more land under more efficient cultivation by creating a class of *tuyuldars* or land-holders who were expected to restore crown land which had deteriorated, and, at the same time, produce revenue from it. The conversion of taxes levied on crops into sums of money recalls the gradual shift of the economy to a cash basis. The abolition of the old conversion rates (known as *tas'īr*) indicates the Constitutionalist's desire to collect more revenue and thus free the country of its dependence on foreign loans and the consequent risk of subservience to the 'two Powers', the *Daulatain*, as Russia and Britain were termed. The Bombardment of the Majlis had temporarily halted these efforts at reform. Shuster worked out a new rate, but, as will be seen, his efforts were also cut short.

Besides engaging Shuster, the Moderate Party Cabinet in 1911 engaged M. Adolphe Perni to assist in the organisation of a Ministry of Justice, and M. de Mornay to perform a similar function in establishing a Ministry of Interior, and an American for the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs.

Perni completed his task by the end of 1911 and the first modern Penal Code was submitted to the Majlis in January 1912. It was an attempt to graft the Napoleonic Code onto the *Shari'a* or religious law. Three leading religious authorities testified that the new Code was acceptable.[2] But the First and Second National Assemblies were both wary of exacerbating clerical opposition, and

[1] A. K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Iran*, Oxford, 1953, pp. 178–179. Cf. Ahmad Kasravi, *Tārīkh-i-Mashrutiyyat dar Iran* ('History of the Constitution in Iran'), Tehran, 1961 edition.

[2] Amin Banani, *The Modernisation of Iran*, Stanford, 1961, p. 38.

the new enactment was a compromise arrangement, albeit a considerable advance towards giving Iran a more modern legal system.

The Mujtahids' acquiescence implied recognition of the inadequacy of the religious law.[1] The creation of a code gave the civil courts a code to operate: the first Majlis had in 1907 inaugurated four such courts in Tehran, the Court of Property and Financial Claims (with its corresponding Department in the Finance Ministry); a Criminal Court; a Court of Appeals and a High Court of Appeal known as the *Divan-i-Tamyiz*. Until the Code drawn up by M. Perni and his Committee came into existence, where these courts had functioned, they had used the Shari'a law. The Majlis itself had acted as a Court, or attempted to do so, especially in arrogating to itself the right to try and condemn anyone branded as an enemy of the people. This is not an unexpected role for any quasi-revolutionary assembly to adopt, but it resulted in the confusion and increased panic to which Muhammad 'Ali Shah's drastic action against the first Majlis can be largely attributed.

Indeed the Constitution alone marked a legal innovation of the first magnitude: it was the first step towards the establishment of secular law, for it marked the break with the old system whereby law had been religious, and dominion had been by usurpation, the former trimming itself to suffer the latter, the latter paying lip-service to the former or, as with the Safavid regime, endeavouring to bring both religious and usurped rights under one head.

[1] Banani, op. cit., p. 68.

Chapter 11

The Eclipse of Hope

SHUSTER found a recently reorganised Finance Ministry, in which an effort had been made to inaugurate delegation of responsibility to departmental heads and to institute expedition in handling correspondence. Some younger blood had been introduced and the reticent inertia of the old financial officials to some extent circumvented. To these changes part of Shuster's initial success must be ascribed. His first achievements were also facilitated by the ready cash, and his judicious and sparing use of it, at once available to him from the loan negotiated just before he reached Iran. The Majlis had agreed to the terms under which the British Imperial Bank of Persia lent the government £1,250,000. Shuster's first aim was to ensure control of this money, of which he clearly only intended to utilise as much as was necessary, in 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi's words,[1] 'to prime the pump'. For by no means the least significant of Shuster's efforts on his arrival in Iran was to prove that, if revenue were properly collected and disbursed, the country could be self-supporting. The loan came in useful to settle demands like that of the Minister of War; demands upon which, while reducing their exorbitancy, Shuster wisely compromised. It was useful to ensure payment of salaries, a very important item in the restoration of confidence in the government machinery at a time when such confidence was a necessary concomitant of successful reorganisation. It was also useful in keeping contented a small contingent of men under arms, preventing them from taking to pillaging. Thus the peace which the Government was trying to establish in a country recently torn by Civil War might be promoted.

In order at the outset to gain control of the loan and to give himself the powers he considered necessary to carry out his mission, Shuster drew up a Bill which empowered him as Treasurer General of the Persian Empire 'to establish a central organisation to be known as the office of the Treasurer-General of Persia, which should be responsible for and have charge of all revenues and Government

[1] 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi, *Sharh-i-Zindagani-ye-Man*, Tehran, 1324/1945–6, Vol. II, p. 493.

receipts, from whatever source derived – an office which should make and authorise all payments, for whatever purpose, on behalf of the Central Government'.[1]

This Bill was passed by the Majlis on 13th June 1911 and made Shuster rather more the master than the servant of the Iranian Government, a fact which was later to work to the detriment of his mission. For seldom if ever has a foreigner been accorded such wide powers. The easy passage of his stipulations may be ascribed to his having won over the Democrats, who in any case wanted to win him over. His demands may be ascribed, partly to what Democrats had told him of the machinations of powerful people, and partly to the fact that he knew how Mornard, the Belgian Customs Director (Naus's successor) had 'in connivance with certain well-known Russian agents in and out of the Medjlis and Persian Cabinet, . . . prepared, just before our arrival, a draft of a law placing the entire control of . . . this loan in the hands of a "commission" composed of fifteen members, of which he was to be the head . . . Thus the American Treasurer-General, who had come to take charge of the Persian finances, would have found himself in the delightful dilemma of either serving as a *subordinate* to Mons. Mornard on this "commission", which was to supervise the Government expenditure, or of staying away and seeing the only available funds of the Government controlled by other hands.'[2]

Shuster's prompt and shrewd action in confiding in the Banks and in ordering that all revenues should forthwith be deposited by the tax authorities in the nearest bank, or mercantile house competent to act as such, enabled him rapidly to realise what funds were in the Government's possession. The only province he had difficulty with was Azerbaijan, where the controller of finances was the Mu'tamidu's-Saltanah with his two sons, Vusuqu'd-Dawlah and Ṣavamu's-Saltanah. But this difficulty need not have been insuperable, although at the outset it proved to the Treasurer-General the necessity of a Treasury Gendarmerie force. He must have conceived this as chiefly a defensive force, but in the unsettled conditions of the time he set great store by its capacity to take the initiative in enforcing his powers. There were powerful tribal leaders and notables who withheld revenue and who could, as events proved, command the protection of Russian troops in their defiance of government and Parliament, hence Shuster's wish to have a force of his own.

Although he knew its limitations, Shuster's determination to respect the Majlis was one of his most admirable traits. He says on

[1] W. Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia*, London, 1912 and 1913, p. 84.
[2] Ibid., p. 64.

page 219 of his book: 'While the Majlis was not ideally representative in the political sense – that is, only a small proportion of the population had participated in the election of its members – it more truly represented the best aspirations of the Persians than any other body that had ever existed in the country . . . It was loyally supported by the great mass of the Persians, and that alone was sufficient justification for its existence."

He first became aware of the lengths to which Anglo-Russian opposition could go, against efforts on behalf of a Persian Parliament to help in the strengthening of Iran, when he tried to recruit a British officer, Major Stokes, for his Treasury corps of Gendarmes. A few of the Iranian Moderates wondered why he did not give the post to an American, for then there would have been no trouble: Anglo-Russian intervention on this score was ostensibly because it would have meant that Stokes, a British national, would operate in the Russian sphere of influence and thus infringe the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907. British attempts to compromise, by suggesting that Stokes's operations be limited to the south, were unacceptable because of Shuster's loyal though only tacit agreement with the Iranian patriots not to do anything implying recognition of the division of Iran into two spheres of influence. His desire to employ Stokes arose in the first instance because Stokes knew Persian; an American would have lacked this important qualification. Yet on this and similar issues Shuster has been accused of obstinacy by some Iranians and by most English writers on the period, in spite of the soundness and honesty of his reasons. Sir George Barclay, the British Minister, seems on the whole to have sympathised with Shuster over the Stokes affair, but the British government vetoed the appointment.

This was a relatively minor incident. What really put the cat among the pigeons was the return of Muhammad 'Ali, the ex-Shah, in July 1911, only a matter of weeks after Shuster had started work. The civil commotion the exile's return occasioned meant that the loan Shuster had been bent on husbanding, using it only as a lubricant for the country's financial machinery, had to finance hostilities. It also meant the recrudescence of violence and gave Russia a pretext for embarking still greater forces for duty in northern Iran.

Under the Tripartite Protocol of September 1909 Russia had bound herself to restrain the ex-Shah from political activity. Nevertheless he had canvassed his cause among European armament dealers in Vienna, Brussels, Berlin, Rome and Paris. He had then travelled in disguise from the Black Sea by train and ship to the east coast of the Caspian, with boxes of weapons labelled 'Mineral

Water', which the Russian authorities had neither questioned nor examined.

Coinciding with his armed intervention in the Turkoman steppes of northern Iran, near the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea, his brother and former rival, the Salaru'd-Daulah, began an insurrection in Kurdistan in Western Iran. The Prince had been governor in this region and had rebelled and seized Hamadan to the discomfiture of his brother, when the latter was still on the throne, in the spring of 1907. He was now, however, ostensibly acting in accord with Muhammad 'Ali Mirza. As he had chosen a wife from among the Lur tribes in the vicinity of Hamadan, he could attract a number of adherents, doubtless also heartened by the promise of loot if they reached the capital.

Likewise the ex-Shah was able to entice to his side the Turkoman tribes of northwestern Khurasan. Once in Iran the Shah's Commander-in-Chief, the Arshadu'd-Daulah, and the ex-Shah himself largely financed themselves on notes of hand in the ex-Shah's name, to be cashed after his restoration. These credit notes were later to prove a source of worry to the Finance Ministry. Meanwhile Shuster gave careful instructions about the withdrawal of funds from the advancing rebels' lines of march. These instructions, which incidentally prove Shuster's incisive grasp of situations and remarkable capacity for decisive action, were carried out as well as they could be in the circumstances; but if Muhammad 'Ali Shah's return achieved nothing else, it spread panic and dismay all over northern, central and western Iran and halted Shuster's swift but delicate restorative surgery on Iran's finances.

The British and Russian Governments, in accordance with the Protocol, sent a joint Note stopping the ex-King's pension but stating that, since he had arrived on Persian soil, they would in no way intervene. This left the Constitutionalists to face the crisis unsupported. Moreover, it was not long before the Russians did intervene, although only when the ex-King's parade had been halted and he had been forced back to the shores of the Caspian.

Muhammad 'Ali Mirza landed on 18th July 1911 and shortly afterwards it became apparent that the Prime Minister, the Sipahdar, was not the most suitable person to lead the nation in the crisis thus provoked. The Sipahdar's loyalty to the Constitution was in doubt, and on 26th July Samsamu's-Saltanah, the Bakhtiari leader, published a new Cabinet with himself as Prime Minister and Minister of War. Of the Bakhtiaris' hostility to Muhammad 'Ali Mirza there could be no uncertainty, and Samsam was at first reasonable, though according to Shuster too weak to withstand the greedy

clamour of his relatives. The Bakhtiaris were again under arms to fight for the Constitution, a contingent of 2,000 of them being expected to march from Isfahan to defend the capital. But this brought demands on the Treasury for cash, some of which, as Shuster knew, were exorbitant. If in a landing by the ex-King the Russians had seen the ruination of Iran's hopes of speedy solvency, which, once achieved, would have released the country from financial vassaldom to the two Powers, then their prognostications had been correct.

The attack on Tehran was four-pronged. Salaru'd-Daulah was moving from the west, Shu'au'd-Daulah, another royal brother, was raising a revolt in Azerbaijan, among the Shahsavan tribes, with a view to attacking from the northwest, and Arshadu'd-Daulah was making good headway with Turkoman tribal recruits from the northeast, while the ex-King was coming in from the north to the foot of Demavand, the graceful snow-covered volcanic cone visible from the capital.

Ephraim Khan knew what had to be done, with the small number of troops at his disposal, to save the capital, but so much did he distrust the Cabinet that he kept his plans very secret, although ultimately one of the younger Bakhtiari Khans went to his assistance. His chief plan was to keep in the city, not dispersing his small force until the last possible moment. Arshadu'd-Daulah was the most immediate danger. He was able, and devoted to his master. His approach, down through Gurgan and western Khurasan towards Varamin, a township close to Tehran, Shahrud and Damghan soon having fallen to him, was disconcertingly fast. Then he disappeared for two days. Lack of reports on his movements were, it was later ascertained, due to his marching across a northwestern stretch of the Kavir, the salt desert, where it approaches close to the capital. Suddenly he emerged near Varamin and it was there that Ephraim Khan defeated him and, after summary trial, condemned him to death and had him shot by firing-squad. His body was shown in Tehran, but treated decently and buried as he had directed, for the Arshadu'd-Daulah had been a brave man; and loyal to the last – he died shouting 'Long Live Muhammad 'Ali Shah!'

This victory put an end to the ex-Shah's campaign. He fled to a ship and made his escape over the Caspian. By early October the rebels were severally defeated, but Iran's hope of stability was dashed and the country again a shambles. Moreover, the Bakhtiaris were in power as never before, a sickening situation for the Moderates. England 'making', as the late Professor Browne said, 'no allowance for the serious preoccupations which had rendered it impossible for the Persian Government to send troops to restore order in the

south, announced her intention of sending a number of Indian troops to Fars . . .' On 27th October the arrival of this detachment at Bushire on the Persian Gulf provoked a Russian announcement on the same day that 200 more Russian troops were to be landed at Enzeli on the Caspian, to be followed by 1700 more, while 1900 men were to advance from Julfa (in Russian Azerbaijan) to Tabriz. This Russian occupation of Tabriz resulted in atrocities of which the full story is told in letters which E. G. Browne translated and had ready for publication when the outbreak of the First World War caused their withdrawal from the press.

The British and Russian actions were different in both motive and character. Russian brutality in Tabriz was paralleled by nothing the British did because the British did not aim at intimidation of the local population. Instead they moved to ensure a general security and peace in which trade and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's activities could be pursued for the benefit of all concerned. British measures were therefore defensive and embarked upon reluctantly as a necessary evil if commercial interests and friendly Iranian merchants and notables, who profited in the south from the British connection, were to prosper and be protected. Russian actions were offensive, part of a deliberate policy of expansion to gain access to warm water ports and compete in world trade. The tragedy was British acquiescence in what the Russians did; and this tragedy began when the 1907 Agreement was concluded. Under this arrangement the oil-fields, whose development began when oil was struck in 1908, lay, as we have seen, in the so-called Neutral Zone. There was the ever-present fear of the possibility of Russian blackmail in the event of this sphere becoming important to British interests. Therefore, however much individual Englishmen might deplore Russian acts in northern Iran, British businessmen and government policy desired no offence to be given the Russians: they must be given no occasion for questioning British influence in the 'neutral' zone.

For this the Iranians were sacrificed and considerable bitterness and suspicion engendered among them, against Britons and Russians alike.

Moreover, in some British circles there was a marked lack of faith in the Iranians' capacity to operate democratic institutions. A British officer in the Indian services recorded that 'It is difficult to imagine the Land of the Lion and Sun without the King of Kings, and to divine how the various provinces could be held together without him as the one central authority.'[1] Because of the size of Iran and diffi-

[1] E. B. Bradley-Burt, *Through Persia from the Gulf to the Caspian*, London, 1909, p. 314.

culty of communications, the Tehran Government could not control tribal groups, the Qashgha'is in Fars for example. The wild tribes of the Makran and Baluchistan cut telephone wires, even killed the officials in remote outposts of the Indo-European Telegraph. Relations with Russia militated against strengthening the *de facto* and *de jure* Constitutional Government. Troops had to be landed on the pretext that the new democrats were incompetent and security had somehow to be maintained. So the argument ran and regrettably England could not entertain the same confidence in Iranian reformers and idealists as Morgan Shuster did, in spite of his awareness of their shortcomings.

If comments in its issue of 19th October 1911 are anything to go by, Shuster's attitude was as unwelcome to *The Times* as it was to British officials. Sir George Barclay was particularly dismayed, it appears, when Shuster, talking to him about 'the attitude of those two Powers . . . so manifestly hostile to Persia's welfare' suggested that 'it might be found advisable to offer certain concessions to German interests, which had for some time previously been seeking an entry into the western part of Persia'. Shuster adds: 'The British Minister's horror at this grim joke was so real that I hastily changed the subject.[1]

Sir George Barclay had been appointed by the Foreign Office. The legation at Tehran had passed from the control of the India Office in 1860, when Sir Henry Rawlinson resigned because of the change; and when this change was actuated by the feeling that British diplomacy in the Iranian capital must be directed by the department also dealing directly with the British Legation in St. Petersburg. Sir George Barclay's view would be conditioned differently, by the exigencies of the world, and in particular European, situation, from the view of the Government of India. The Government of India still appointed the Resident in the Persian Gulf and consuls in the south. This fact helped to make British responses to situations in southern Iran sometimes appear to emanate from an entirely different source, as, in so far as that source was the Government of India, indeed they did. Later, this and related issues were not lost on Reza Shah, for when he came to survey the Iranian State, it seemed as if the south looked not so much towards the centre as outwards towards British India.

Iran was, so to speak, where Whitehall and Calcutta met over the defence of India and its communications with Europe. One thing neither the Indian nor the Foreign Office wanted was to occupy Iran, and treaty obligations precluded annexation of any part of it.

[1] W. Morgan Shuster, op. cit., p. 135.

Nor apparently was a strong, self-supporting and self-assertive Iran considered convenient. Iran was therefore neither to enjoy those benefits British rule conferred on India, nor to be encouraged to benefit itself, if only because such encouragement would have impaired relations with Russia. Modern Iranian antipathy towards Britain might have been less had Britain been as paternal towards Iranians as towards her Indian subjects; or had she let Iranians work out their own destiny in their own way – naturally the course they would have much preferred. But Britain's disregard for Iranian efforts and her lack of confidence in Iranian capacity to know what in the end was best for the country, Britain's attitude of self-interested patronage, left a suspicion and antipathy which time and new policies have so far not entirely removed.

One of the episodes that contributed to Iranian bitterness was the departure of Shuster. The Majlis had passed a bill sequestrating the property in Tehran of the rebellious Prince Shu'au's-Saltanah. Mr. Shuster felt it incumbent upon him to execute this law through his Treasury Gendarmes. The Cossack sentries, whom the absent Prince's family (the Prince had fled to Turkey) had asked to guard the house and grounds, were taken by surprise. The house was commandeered on behalf of the Government, but two Russian officers arrived from the Russian Consulate and drove the Treasurer General's men away. The Russian Minister, Poklewski-Koziell, writing that prior reference to the Russian Consulate-General should be a condition of carrying out such confiscations, nevertheless at first admitted to Shuster that the Persian Government could so act in regard to the Shu'au's-Saltanah's property. There was a similar incident shortly afterwards over the property of a notable who owed taxes, Prince Alau'd-Daulah. This Prince was later assassinated and it appeared on the surface that the Democrat *anjumans* were implicated. The event is important because it can be related to the gradual alienation of Shuster from the government, particularly the Bakhtiaris.

The Russian Minister was at first more reasonable than his notorious Consul-General, Pokhitenoff, who worked to exacerbate the unpleasant situation Shuster was getting into. Nevertheless on 2nd November 1911 the Minister presented an ultimatum to the Persian Foreign Office. The demands were that the Treasury officials be immediately withdrawn from the Shu'au's-Saltanah's property, Persian Cossacks of the Russian-officered Cossack Brigade replacing them; and that the Foreign Minister in person apologise for an alleged insult to Russian Consular staff. The Iranian protest, sent in reply, was returned, but the Cabinet stood firm. There were press

reports of a Russian threat to seize Gilan. These rumours eventually made the Iranian Government so apprehensive that British advice was sought. The British Foreign Secretary telegraphed recommending acceptance of the Russian demands and that the required apology should be made.[1] Shuster suspected also that the Bakhtiari Prime Minister, Samsamu's-Saltanah, was succumbing to Russian blandishments, but it is probable that he was simply getting bored with what looked like a developing *impasse*.

The Russians, their ultimatum still unanswered, broke off Ministerial relations (though Consuls were not to be withdrawn) on 18th November. A new Cabinet was formed and the Iranian Foreign Minister made the necessary apology on 24th November, Shuster having recalled his gendarmes from Shu'au's-Saltanah's estates. The Russian Minister's response to this Iranian effort to come to terms was a second and much more drastic ultimatum, delivered on 24th November.

Shuster had used a British national, Lecoffre, whom on his arrival he had found in the employment of the Ministry of Finance, for duties in connection with his reorganisation of tax collection. The British Government had warned him that if he sent Lecoffre to the north he would arouse Russian protests in pursuance of the 1907 Agreement. On 29th November 1911, the first of the Russian Government's 'proposals' to the Government of Iran was that Shuster and Lecoffre should be dismissed. The second was an undertaking by the Iranians not to employ foreign subjects without the *sanction* of the Russian and British Legations. The third was that Iran should defray, by an indemnity, the expenses of 'the present despatch of troops to Persia'. In the Russian Minister's appended explanations it was stated that the reasons for these demands were:

'1. The absolute necessity of obtaining compensation owing to the fact that the (Russian) Imperial Government had been forced to send troops to Persia and owing to the recent insulting acts of Mr. Shuster towards Russia.

2. The earnest desire of the Imperial Government is now to remove the principal source of conflict which has arisen and in the future to lay the foundations upon which the two Governments can firmly build up friendly and stable relations, and to give a prompt and satisfactory solution to all the Russian matters and questions still pending.

3. In addition to the above facts I have to point out that the Imperial Government will not wait longer than forty-eight hours for the execution of the aforesaid proposals, and during this

[1] W. Morgan Shuster, op. cit., p. 162.

interval the Russian troops will remain at Rasht (spelt in the quotation *Resht*—the capital of Gilan). If no reply or an unsatisfactory reply be received at the expiration of the said period, the troops will advance, and it is evident that this will increase the indemnity to be paid by Persia to Russia."[1]

Drought and the ex-Shah's invasion had resulted in a poor crop in northern Iran so that, at the time of this ultimatum, the Cabinet was also beset by bread riots in the capital. Wheat supplies to bakers involved the Government because of the practice whereby wheat paid in taxes was supposed to be distributed from government granaries at equitable prices throughout the winter months, ensuring a regular supply. When supply or prices faltered, the Government lost the people's confidence and bread riots provided a disturbing index to the state of public opinion. Shuster managed to ease the situation by getting some wheat into the city. Meanwhile the Majlis, and particularly the Democrat party, was showing signs of strong activity, in the belief that a second plot was afoot to destroy the Constitution.

A split occurred between the Cabinet and the Majlis, the former having in the end decided to yield to the Russian ultimatum, the latter, to resist. The Majlis voted to reject the ultimatum on 1st December 1911, in one of its greatest hours, only one or two members abstaining. This attitude was reaffirmed two days later in a secret meeting between Majlis and Cabinet. A boycott of Russian and English imports was proclaimed by the mullas. Even the Belgian-owned tramway and small railway to the suburb of Shah Abdul-Azim (Iran's only railway at this time apart from the one in the oil-fields) were deserted because of the Russian-owned stock in their controlling companies. Even tea-drinking, a national pastime, was abandoned. Some 12,000 Russian troops were deployed throughout northern Iran, and moved towards the capital. All the parties then represented in the Majlis, that is, Democrats, Moderates, Unionists and Progressives with the Dashnaksiyutian Armenian party, were united in their resolution to resist the Russian advance. The Women's Societies were active behind the scenes, preventing any wavering of courage among their menfolk.[2] They even went so far as to march to the Majlis and threaten the Deputies if they showed signs of capitulating. But the Majlis remained resolute. On 24th December the Cabinet of Samsam, legally deposed when the Majlis refused its request to be allowed to comply with the Russian ultimatum,

[1] Text as given by Morgan Shuster, op. cit., p. 165.

[2] See Morgan Shuster, op. cit., p. 186 for an interesting reference to Iranian women and their role in society when still in seclusion.

executed a *coup d'état* against the Majlis, clearing Parliament with troops and Bakhtiari ruffians.

A Directory of seven, including Ephraim Khan, took over the direction of the country. Deputies were threatened with death if they assembled. Samsamu's-Saltanah's decision not to oppose the Russian pressure weakened Shuster's relations with the Cabinet whose members had hoped that he would resign so that recourse to the Majlis might be obviated. As Shuster had stood his ground, the Majlis had been given its chance to show defiance. If Shuster would not go, the Majlis, which had employed him, had to.

Shuster, although his object in obtaining special powers had been to make himself independent of both the Cabinet and the Majlis, always considered Parliament, not the Cabinet, his master. Therefore the Majlis's closure left him unsupported against a 'Cabinet' consisting of Bakhtiaris, who showed themselves venal, and of Vusuqu'd-Daulah, now Minister of Foreign Affairs, and his brother, Qavamu's-Saltanah, now Minister of the Interior, both men with whom Shuster could not expect for long to enjoy amicable relations. The Bakhtiaris were now in control and would not brook Shuster's hold on the purse-strings. According to his own testimony, although he may have erred in ascribing causes to it, he noticed a marked coldness from Vusuq and Qavam 'when they learned that I had despatched Mr. Lecoffre to Tabriz to investigate the gross frauds and malversions of the revenues which had been going on there for a year before and ever since my arrival in Tehran'. The father of these two Ministers was, as we have seen, Azerbaijan's chief revenue official.

Several hints were dropped to Shuster about resignation, but to no avail. On Christmas Day 1911 he was finally dismissed. He left on 11th January 1912, the Shah's motor car being placed at his disposal to take him to the Caspian port where he was to embark for Europe. M. Mornard, the Belgian, took over as Treasurer-General, to remain in office until 1918.

Chapter 12

The Regency and the Bakhtiaris

MR. SHUSTER'S departure was a defeat for the Democrats from which they never recovered. For although the Cabinet he served was of a moderate complexion and later overridden by the Bakhtiaris, it had been among the Democrats that he had aroused the most hopes, and they had been those who really believed in his mission. The Democrat rank and file, and their real leaders – as opposed to the garrulous prince who acted as leader in the absence of men like Taqizadeh – were men who had nothing to lose by stringent financial reforms, a tight husbanding of foreign loans and stoppage of the drain on the country's resources for a minority's private enrichment. They were not the heirs to positions which required wealth to be maintained. They were new men who wanted to make a new Iran. After Shuster went, hopes of solvency, which was a prerequisite of Iran's liberation from the Powers, and resuscitation gradually faded. Men of democratic and intellectual leanings who had not fled before now left and already in 1912 and 1913 the Persian language was becoming increasingly heard on the shores of Lake Geneva.

The defeat of the Democrats by 1912 clinched the question of who in its earlier stages was going to win the Constitutional Revolution. According to a special correspondent, writing on *The Decay of Persia* in *The Times* of 7th March 1913, nothing was 'more astonishing than the dearth of new men . . . , the total failure of the constitutional movement to bring to the front an array of middle-class zeal and talent, and the success with which the princes, nobles, governors, and the whole official world, who had wrought the downfall of the old regime, succeeded in imposing themselves on the new." But then the middle class was still very young in 1906 and the bureaucracy built up by the Qajars relatively strong and resilient. Its personalities were the only group conversant with the machinery of Government. They were a compact body, related to each other and to the Court by marriage; and capable of understanding the idiom they all shared to such an extent that they could read each other's minds easily, and, whatever public attitudes they might adopt, could privately com-

municate with fellow members of their class. However, by 1912 the new element of the Bakhtiari Khans, whose power ultimately rested on their tribal position, came into prominent conflict with the bureaucratic group of hereditary notables. Meanwhile, Democrats and intellectuals who were unable to flee the country gradually went underground, to re-emerge during the First World War as supporters of the Germans and the companions of the remnants of the *Mujahiddin*, the 'Freedom Fighters' of earlier days.

It is not clear to what extent the Bakhtiari Sardar Asad really in the first months of 1912 entertained the idea of making a bid to entrench his family permanently at the head of affairs. His relative, Samsamu's-Saltanah, was Prime Minister of a Cabinet which continued to function unconstitutionally in the absence of the Majlis. Samsam had to follow the Sardar's wishes and, according to Yahya Daulatabadi,[1] the Sardar did think of the Crown and sounded Iranians in Europe on their reactions were he to attempt assuming it. It has been supposed that 1912, when the Bakhtiaris were certainly at the height of their power, was the year of this tribe's attempt to seize the Iranian throne; an attempt for which they later had to pay dearly under Reza Shah. Yet, although Sardar Asad's reassuring telegram to Mr. H. F. B. Lynch on 24th January that 'myself and my family do not in the least think of acquiring the Regency or of establishing a Bakhtiari dynasty' may be taken simply as a diplomatic disclaimer, dynastic intentions were probably never more than fitful visitants to the Bakhtiari's mind, to be pushed aside as he addressed himself to more immediate possibilities.

For the family were doing quite well as it was, under the weak regency of Nasiru'l-Mulk. The embarrassment of Mr. Shuster's presence removed, relations with the English were good, and Samsamu's-Sultanah had satisfied the Russians also; and strove to keep them satisfied. Bakhtiari relations with the British were of a special order because of the southern oil production area's being in Bakhtiari territory; as well as the interests of the Tigris-Euphrates Navigation Company of the Lynch brothers, whose pack-route from the Persian Gulf to Isfahan depended for security upon Bakhtiari goodwill.

Bakhtiaris were given lucrative provincial governorships, the family following former Qajar practice in so appointing, dispersing and rewarding its dependents. Each kept his own retinue of, as one Iranian observer has it, sixty, seventy up to two or three hundred *sawārs* or mounted men. They made the family name execrated in

[1] Yahya Dawlatābādī, *Hayat-i-Yahya* ('Yahya's Life'), Tehran, 1331/1942–1943, p. 215.

the south and east of the country by their depredations. To this day a citizen of Kirman falls silent at the mention of the name Bakhtiari, of which that city has had a gubernatorial reminder in the last ten years.

They also preyed upon the Treasury, now released from Shuster's grip. For their henchmen had to be paid, either by retention of revenue at the source or directly from the centre. M. Mornard was not anxious to embroil himself with the most powerful men in the land at the time. He was therefore a complacent treasurer so long as he had any money to disburse. Likewise he pandered to the grandees who had acquired *khalisah* or crown lands near Tehran and who refused to subscribe to the new tax regulations the Majlis sought to impose on it. The result of this lack of firmness on Mornard's part, coupled with drought, was a worsened bread situation in the capital. The result of Bakhtiari dominance was ultimately that the Treasury had not only to pay the official gendarmerie but the Bakhtiari governors' private 'armies'; while other provincial governors had followed suit, demanding Cossack guards.[1]

On taking over the post of Mr. Shuster, M. Mornard continued to enjoy the extraordinary powers the Majlis had granted his predecessor. At first European observers concluded that his appointment would only be temporary. But the attraction of his being a subject of one of the so-called minor powers presumably inhibited the Iranians from risking any change which might have entailed pressure from the Great Powers to appoint either a Frenchman or Britisher in his place. Although, even because, Mornard was a *persona grata* to the Russians, he continued in office until the temporary relaxing of Anglo-Russian domination at the outset of the World War made it less dangerous to dismiss him. He was never liked. There was his pro-Russian taint for one thing, while memories of his compatriot and predecessor in the Customs, M. Naus, were still fresh. The British seem privately to have shared the Iranian antipathy for him.

He attempted to run the Treasury as he and his fellow Belgians had the Customs. While some sources affirm that the administration of the Customs was efficient and afforded an example of procedure to Iranian trainees, others describe the skill with which the Belgians prevented Iranians from ever getting a real grasp on how the system worked, or from reaching posts of responsibility. 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi, in his autobiography (which is sub-titled 'A History of Qajar Bureaucracy'), states that only the Belgian officials knew the secrets of their Customs Directorate; and says that, although it may be

[1] 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi, op. cit., p. 515.

thought difficult for Customs procedures to be very complex, the Belgians were past-masters at making them seem so, and relied chiefly on themselves or Armenian subordinates, to the exclusion of Muslim Iranians. 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi is generally dispassionate. He also says that the Belgians used spies. In a land which had become notorious for corruption, this is hardly surprising. But it is mentioned here in the larger context of the degradation which conditions had brought about in Iran, and to illustrate how foreign agents, wittingly or otherwise, fostered this degradation by themselves resorting to immoral methods and so adding to the bad example already being set on an alarming scale by the corrupt elements who had the reins of government.

The insecurity of the years 1906–1921, the power of foreigners, the bad example of greedy leaders, the breakdown of the religious institution and the morality it should have upheld, the scope given to an innate tendency to despondency by the apparent hopelessness of Iran's situation, were all conducive to a decline in public morality which assumed proportions from whose effects Iran is only just beginning to recover. Any act by foreigners which subscribed to this decay of morality made their presence the more disgusting to men already anxious, as many were, about the consequences of their country's increasing depravity. In the Persian idiom used to express an irreconcilable difference, 'Where was Mr. Shuster? M. Mornard, where?'

However, whether or not M. Mornard was able is immaterial as he was the stop-gap inserted under Russian pressure and the symbol of Russian victory in the struggle against Iranian patriots who, through the National Consultative Assembly, had striven to make the country solvent by appointing a Treasurer-General to achieve this aim. The most conclusive evidence that Shuster had showed signs of succeeding is the Russian occupation of northern Iran to ensure his removal. As Lord Lamington said in Edinburgh on 3rd January 1912, 'Persia has not had a chance. She is hampered and thwarted in her regeneration; and, adding insult to injury, leader-writers in the Press have attributed the present chaos to her own mistakes. One point is clear. On the one or two occasions when she appeared to be extricating herself from her difficulties Russia has interposed. Mr. Shuster is accused of lack of tact – a poor charge on which to base invasion of a country.'[1] Wiedemann, the Baltic-German head of the Russian Bank in Iran at the time, is reported as confirming that Russia left no stone unturned to ensure Iran's fiscal thraldom.

[1] Reported in *The Times* of 4th January 1912.

The Government had no standing army. There was, therefore, no possibility of a military answer either to Russian occupation or diplomatic pressure. The Bakhtiari rulers relied on their tribesmen and on the remnants of irregular fighters from the revolution. The Persian Cossacks were in effect a Russian force. Lack of an efficient army controlled by the Government made disorders inevitable away from centres where governors' guards could ensure some control. In the case of Shiraz, the powerful Qashgha'i tribe made even this control impossible. Routes between Iran's far-flung cities became more insecure than they had ever been since the middle of the eighteenth century. The presence of Russian troops in the north, however, estimated in February at approximately ten or eleven thousand men, kept Azerbaijan and the Caspian provinces subdued, using considerable brutality in doing so; but as will be seen, a Russian force of 2,800 men in Khurasan was unable to prevent disorder in the city of Meshed, later the scene of an ugly Russian demonstration.

The worst affected areas were the south and west of Iran, where all semblance of security ceased to exist, a state of affairs, characteristic in large areas of Iran whenever the central power faltered, prevailing. Trade with India in Kirman, Yazd, Shiraz and Isfahan was brought to a standstill. There was opposition in Britain to Lord Hardinge's increasing inclination to urge the landing of troops in order to revive the Indian trade; although this Viceroy himself early in the year expressed unwillingness to land forces 'as that might lead to partition'. Instead he had proposed instructing the British Resident at Bushire to negotiate with the tribes for the punishment of murderers and marauders. The Indian Government's anxiety was seriously aroused after the attack on Mr. Smart, a British consular official, in January. An interesting feature of the deteriorating situation in the south was the report that by April 1912 it was easier for the merchants of Yazd to buy goods from Russia than from India. By May it was clear that, while Manchester could no longer reach markets in southern Iran, Moscow could.

Towards the end of March 1912 it was reported from Bombay that efforts to prevent gun-running from Muscat to the Makran coast of Iran, on the opposite side of the Persian Gulf, had been successful. The concern had primarily been the old one, of preventing arms being smuggled through Afghanistan to the Northwest Frontier. To this was added the anxiety to stop the flow of arms to the Persian tribes, who were certainly formidably equipped with weapons. Although the Sultan of Muscat co-operated in stopping the traffic, throughout 1912 the tribes in Fars gave no indication of

a diminishing supply of ammunition. Not only was the province of Fars virtually in tribal hands: by October the road from Ahwaz to Isfahan, through the Bakhtiari section of the Zagros, had been closed for four months and in an article in *The Times* of 22nd October in this context reference was again made to the benefits to Russian trade, this time in Isfahan, from this closure of a southern trade route. This situation between Isfahan and the southwestern ports on the Shatt-al-Arab is further significant in the picture it clearly gives of the decline, towards the end of 1912, of Bakhtiari power, even in the central region, their home ground. Thus almost the only local fighting power upon which at the beginning of the year Russia and Britain might have placed some reliance was by the end of it dissipated, and the Bakhtiari Government forced early in October to entrust the security of the road from Qum to Isfahan, a metropolitan route, to a brigand and his men, turned government agents.

Among the separate military forces was the Gendarmerie, whose creation began in 1911. At first the Bakhtiaris had been loath to let its development result in any appreciable diversion of funds from their own personally controlled irregulars. At the same time, however, with Lord Hardinge's threats of direct negotiations with southern tribes and the possibility of more British forces being landed, it seems that in the gendarmerie the Bakhtiari Government saw at least a token force for use in negotiations with the British, to convince them that the Central Government had a militia to restore order on its behalf. Nevertheless, the Bakhtiaris had to avoid the risk of strengthening the gendarmerie to such an extent that their requests for support for efforts to create a national force, requests made throughout 1912, would be invalidated.

Another factor inhibiting outright strengthening of the gendarmerie was possibly the Bakhtiaris' delicate position in relation to Russia, which had its own local militia in the Russian-officered Cossack Brigade. However much overtly the Bakhtiaris, in common with other Iranians, may have deplored the division of Iran into northern and southern spheres of influence under the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, ultimately it became generally recognised that the gendarmerie's field of operations should be in the south, outside the Russian sphere; though as will be seen below, in this year, 1912, the Bakhtiari Government in the end was forced officially to recognise the Agreement. In any event, in the circumstances an Iranian government's enthusiasm for building up anything resembling a national force obviously had to be discreetly guarded. The prevailing insecurity made the need of such a force evident, but the two Powers were apparently uncertain about how far to permit the Iranian

Government effectively to arm itself; a matter which to some extent had to mark time in anticipation of diplomatic manoeuvres in the process of deciding what, if any, advantages could be gained from Iran's weakness.

On 17th March 1912 the two Powers assured Iran that they had no desire to limit the size of the army and that, in accordance with an Iranian protest over one of the stipulations in the Anglo-Russian Note of the preceding 18th February, they did not object to the employment of officers of the minor powers for the army as well as the gendarmerie. In the Anglo-Russian Note the Iranian Government had been asked to conform to the principles of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 and to ensure the disbandment of irregulars, it being promised that the British and Russian representatives would be prepared to discuss the formation of a 'small army'. The Russians continued to insist that the officers of the Cossack Brigade should always be Russian. Finally, on 21st March, Iran accepted the Anglo-Russian note which laid down the conditions for a loan advance of £200,000, to be tied to northern and southern Customs' receipts. One of those conditions was gravely extreme, for the Iranian Government at last found itself compelled to state that it would conform to the principles of the 1907 Agreement – 'se montrera soucieux de conformer sa politique aux principes de la Convention de 1907'.

In fact no satisfactory regular army was formed until the time of Reza Shah, who made its formation his primary objective. In the difficult circumstances of 1912 the Swedish officer, Col. Hjalmarson, in charge of the gendarmerie, managed with a few of his compatriots to build up an efficient but limited force. For the time being this Swedish Gendarmerie came to be regarded as an ally of the British. It might be considered to have been a counterpoise in the south to the Cossack Brigade in the Russian-dominated north.

One of the demands made in the Iranian acceptance of the Anglo-Russian Note was early withdrawal of foreign troops. This could now be considered feasible as Muhammad 'Ali Mirza, the ex-Shah, had finally left the island of Ashurada earlier in March, arriving at Odessa on the fourteenth. After the defeat of his forces at the end of 1911, the ex-Shah had continued to linger on the Caspian coast and had thus been a threatening factor in the situation, lending the possibility of justification for the continued Russian military occupation of the north. The Russians had profited from the situation to establish Samad Khan, one of their sympathisers, firmly in the governorship of Azerbaijan, while a governor appointed from Tehran was only able to function nominally. Meanwhile St. Peters-

burg had continually emphasised a complete change of heart towards the ex-Shah's cause by telegrams, apparently well publicised, to Russian consular officials ordering them in no circumstances to lend countenance to the ex-Shah's pretentions. Russian hostility towards Muhammad 'Ali Mirza's partisans reached hysterical proportions late in March when the shrine at Meshed was bombarded by Russian artillery after supporters of the ex-Shah had taken refuge there.

A much more disruptive and prolonged royalist threat than that of the defeated ex-Shah was furnished by the activities in western Iran, among the Lurs and Salhur Kurds, of Salaru'd-Daulah, the ex-Shah's brother. Britain was to reap the whirlwind sown by Salaru'd-Daulah in the districts of Kirmanshah and Hamadan when, during the First World War she confronted hostile movements in those areas. In 1912 Britain's chief anxiety over Salaru'd-Daulah's activities seems to have centred round the desire that the Russians should not send an expedition to Kirmanshah to drive Salaru'd-Daulah out of Iran. Russia, however, co-operated in British efforts to induce the prince to go of his own accord on receipt of promises of a pension. Salaru'd-Daulah refused to accept these blandishments and did not leave Iran until October 1912. His persistence gave rise to the suspicion that he was aided by the Turks, but it may have only been attributable to his assured position among the tribes of the Kirmanshah area.

The protracted war against him provided further opportunities for a display of gallantry and good leadership from the Armenian Ephraim Khan, who, it will be remembered, on the dissolution of the Majlis had accepted the post of Chief of Police under the Bakhtiaris and Sipahdar's Moderate Party's Government. Ephraim Khan defeated an attempt by Salaru'd-Daulah to seize Hamadan in May 1912 but was murdered immediately after his victory.

The Armenian Dashnaksiyutian party was a secret organisation founded by Turkish Armenians in 1890. Its principal operations were carried out in the Caucasus region where, at the beginning of 1912, Dashnaksiyutian leaders were being tried by the Russian authorities after an attempt to establish a Caucasian Federal Republic. Members of this organisation had spilled over into Iran to take part in the Iranian 'Democrats' first stand against Muhammad 'Ali Shah after he had suppressed the Majlis in 1908. Their role in Iran from then on into 1912 was a submerged one in which they were loosely allied with the more extremist Iranian intellectual democratic agitators. It is a role that has not yet been given the historical appraisal it merits; but the Armenian who inevitably found his place in the history of the time was Ephraim. His relations with other Armenians, and with the

Democrats generally, naturally became strained after his rejection of the Democratic Party and his conciliation with the Bakhtiaris.

Ephraim may be judged to have been primarily a soldier, not concerned with the intrigues whereby both Armenians and the intellectual Iranian Democrats strove after 1911 to save something from the wreckage of the Constitutional Movement. At this time Ephraim, once he had defeated Muhammad 'Ali Mirza and driven him back to the shelter of the Russian Naval Establishment on the island of Ashurada in the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea, was fully occupied with containing Salaru'd-Daulah in the west, round Kirmanshah, and forcing him out of the country. Faced with this task, Ephraim moved away from the futile schemes of the defeated democratic politicians. In the meantime the Dashnaksiyutian Society in May withdrew all support from the Government in protest against the continued postponement of parliamentary elections; this would imply intensification of the Society's hostility towards Ephraim Khan and might account for his murder in the same month.

At the end of May 1912 the Regent, Nasiru'l-Mulk, left for Switzerland. His ensuing long absence gave rise to rumours from time to time that the Bakhtiaris claimed to have superseded him in the Regency. The British and Russians later found occasion to urge him to return. But he continued to live in Europe, thus contriving to delay the functions of government sufficiently for no major policy decisions to be made throughout the period immediately before the First World War.

The Bakhtiaris did not in fact supplant Nasiru'l-Mulk in the Regency; rather, on occasion, it was convenient to have the Head of the State outside the country; but to have to refer to him by telegram whenever postponement of a decision was desirable. It meant in effect that the two Powers were confronted by two Iranian governments, one in Tehran and one in the person of the Regent on the shores of Lake Geneva. Naturally no major decision could be taken in Tehran without reference to His Highness, while, as in the case of the representative whom the Bakhtiaris appointed to speak for Iran in Europe in connection with railway concession proposals, Nasiru'l-Mulk could cancel arrangements made in Tehran – with the result, in the instance cited, that Iran was not represented at either discussions in Paris about the construction of a Trans-Iranian Railway, or discussions in London and at Balmoral between Sir Edward Grey and the Russian Foreign Minister.[1]

Thus Nasiru'l-Mulk's sojourn in Europe may be seen as a form of passive resistance to foreign pressure. The railway plans partly

[1] Yahya Daulatabadi, op. cit., pp. 218–219.

foundered on Nasiru'l-Mulk's refusal to return to Iran to convene a Majlis, and yet Nasiru'l-Mulk was ever prone to remind his advisers that he was constitutionally appointed Head of State, whose appointment could only be terminated legally by the Majlis, while his conscience prohibited him acting contrary to the Constitution. It is in conduct of this kind that the quiet determination and patient capacity for biding their time of the old type of Iranian aristocracy can be seen in operation.

As early as January 1912 the Russian proposal that a railway, linking the Russian railway system with that of India across Iran, be constructed, resulted in a meeting of financiers in Paris who formed a Société d'Études to plan this railway linkage. The capital was to be raised by British, French and Russian Banks. Russians were to undertake surveying from the Caspian to Tehran, and it was proposed that the line should be made from Tehran to Gwattar on the Gulf of Oman, a distance of 1,200 miles, through Kirman. The original plans and estimates were subject to considerable revision in the course of the year. It is amusing to note, for example, a British move to ensure that the railway followed the coast line of the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman for a sufficient distance to be satisfactorily covered by British warships in the event of Russian attempts to use the railway in a hostile move towards India. Indeed considerable antipathy to the scheme existed in Great Britain, particularly in military circles influenced by the anxieties of the Indian Army. The scheme was also reported not to be welcomed in Russian commercial circles who, as already indicated, profited from Iranian markets in central and northern Iran being inaccessible to British goods fed in from the south. Nevertheless, the Société d'Études continued to meet, with a French president and British and Russian vice-presidents. By 8th May the Société had a Council of Administration of twenty-four members, with eight representatives from Britain, France and Russia, but, as was the case throughout the Société's deliberations, no Persian representative.

At the same time, another railway scheme, this time entirely British, supported by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, the British Imperial Bank of Persia, the Euphrates and Tigris Navigation Company and the British India Steam Navigation Company, was being discussed, even to the extent of talks with the Iranian Foreign Ministry, for a railway from the Khuzistan coast, in the vicinity of the Khor Musa inlet later chosen by Reza Shah as the terminal for the Trans-Iranian railway, to Khurramabad. However, Iran's railway age was in the event to be postponed for a further twenty years; the Regent, Nasiru'l-Mulk, had perhaps been wise not to share in the

Bakhtiari Government's interest in the deliberations of the Société d'Études. Moreover, if Yahya Daulatabadi is to be believed, Nasiru'l-Mulk was fully aware that the desire of certain members of the government to intrude their presence at railway discussions in Paris, or in the deliberations of the Russian and British Foreign Ministers, were motivated, not so much from patriotic concern over the fate of Iran, as from anxiety not to be left out of negotiations which might be to their personal profit.

By the summer of 1912 it was possible to review the financial situation arising from the hastily accepted loan advance of £200,000, which was handed over to the Iranian Government in April, with, in addition to the stipulations already mentioned, arrangements for an increase in the Cossack Brigade and insistence on prompt disbursements for the Gendarmerie at Shiraz. In connection with the latter it may be noted that in August Mukhbiru's-Saltanah, who had been appointed Governor of Fars five months before, had still not left Tehran to take up his appointment because, it was believed, he had failed to come to an understanding with M. Mornard over the funds he would require. Meanwhile, in Shiraz itself the local powerful notable, Qavamu'l-Mulk, was reported to be thwarting the Swedish gendarmerie officers in carrying out their duties.

Regarding the loan, the surplus of the northern Customs, as a result of Russian manipulation of tariffs, was, as *The Times* of 14th August reported, capable of producing £100,000 plus interest in the course of one year, even after payment of already existing loan charges on these Customs receipts. This fact made *The Times* correspondent assert of the loan that, 'However beneficent the intention of the Russian Government, it will be seen that in practice no more effective way of facilitating a rake's progress could easily be devised'. Great Britain, however, waived her claim on the surplus of the southern Customs, which in any event would have been negligible at any period in 1912. Although Russian policy had undergone some change in details, it seems evident that its main purpose was still to perpetuate Iran's economic subjugation; while, despite everything, Russian trade with northern Iran was obviously prospering.

Later in the year the sinister fact became apparent that somehow the question of loans had become associated with the matter of the railway concession, for in December M. Mornard was reported as having told the Iranian Government that he could not obtain funds from abroad unless the railway negotiations could be brought to a successful conclusion. By September the Russians had decided to change their Minister in Tehran as part of an effort to establish a strong central government in Iran and, it was said, 'stop the constitutional farce'.

Statements of this kind might, of course, have been made in preparation for the meeting between Sazanoff, the Russian Foreign Minister, and Sir Edward Grey, at the end of the same month. The Communiqué after this meeting, in which the Balkan situation took precedence over all other questions, expressed the fact that the two Powers had no desire to partition Persia and only wanted the Persian Government to be built up so that it could re-establish order and secure the safety of trade routes. As already noted, so far as the south was concerned, trade routes had not been made safe by the end of the year, and at the same time the province of Fars had become a veritable battleground in the rivalry between Saulatu'd-Daulah, head of the Qashgha'i federation of tribes, and Qavamu'l-Mulk, head of the Khamsah group. It was estimated that, while in 1900 the Qashgha'is possessed less than 200 modern rifles, they now had 15,000, and the flow of ammunition continued unabated.

In spite of the stress under which Iranians of all classes were living during the years 1912 and 1913, and in spite of the temporary suspension of the kind of political regime for which the Constitutionalists had fought, the desire for education which had received impetus from the Constitutional Movement continued to be a feature in the lives of a large number of more intelligent and better-off urban people. Although the more sober elements in the educated class kept aloof from the democratic intellectuals, and silently suffered the suspension of constitutional government, they continued to believe in education because they thought that education, coupled with constitutional rule, would be capable of doing for Iran what it had done for Japan.

To assist in the attainment of this ambition, by 1912 there were approximately 180 schools of various denominations under European and American supervision in some form or another, including missionary schools run directly by British and American Protestant Missions. In fact, in the darkest months of the year, so far as the city of Shiraz was concerned it is both heartening and ironical to find that the Anglican Bishop resident in Iran was advertising for assistance in developing a hospital there – at a time when in British political circles it was being stated that consular guards in the southern cities of Iran afforded insufficient protection for Great Britain's representatives.

At the beginning of the year there was already an Iranian student problem in Europe; a problem which disturbed some of the older and more thoughtful Iranian exiles; and a problem which still exists in the year 1965. Yahya Daulatabadi gives three types of Iranian student abroad in 1913: 1. Infants who, when returning to their

country later in life, do not know their own people and language well enough to be of any value to the community, and who are too conceited to learn anything; 2. Those who have first received an Iranian education and who, if they go abroad with the right intentions and have good teachers, can be of value when they come back home; 3. The pleasure seekers, seeking to enjoy all the pleasures and the freedom from restraint which are believed to be characteristic of European society. According to Daulatabadi, this last category merely imported back to Iran pessimism and immorality, aping foreigners and feeling contempt for their fellow countrymen; and, an extremely significant point, were solely bent on obtaining wealth in order to have the means of purchasing the kind of luxury for themselves which they had seen enjoyed by wealthy people in the west. Daulatabadi describes returned students of this type as politically shameless and charlatans in learning; like his contemporary, 'Abdu'llah Mustaufi, he complains of the undue consideration which was demanded by the sons of the well-to-do who had been to Europe, simply because they had been there, not because they had acquired any real merit. Observations of this kind are paralleled by the satire with which the great modern Iranian writer, Jamalzadah, described the Europeanised student returning to Iran some time just before the First World War, in his story *Farsi Shikar Ast* ('Persian is Sugar'). He parodied a young man's attempts to speak his native language by substituting French for the Persian words he had forgotten.

Under the Bakhtiari Government, with foreign influence at its height, it is not surprising that the administration was to some extent overhauled; although, the foreign influence being largely negative and the impoverishment and disordered state of the country having become extreme, naturally administrative reforms were chiefly on paper, and had little effect in practice but to continue the process whereby government departments were created for officials rather than officials trained to serve government departments.

Among the modifications which were made was the establishment of new Ministries of Public Works, Education and Justice. The Ministry of Public Works was to be responsible for industries, agriculture, roads and mines. Mines for salt and certain valuable dyes remained, however, under the Ministry of Finance. The new Ministry of Public Works was reported as having hardly sufficient budgetary provision to cover the salaries of officials. The same budgetary situation characterised the new Ministries of Education and Justice. The former, however, could draw on religious endowments (*auqaf*), and indeed perquisites from this source were an

attraction to service in this Ministry. The new Ministry of Education assumed powers of granting permission for the printing of books, a fact which hampered rather than facilitated the spread of instructive and useful literature, partly because the Ministry was thus enabled to exercise a form of censorship, and partly because, in the reactionary circumstances of the time, a reactionary type of cleric was able to obtain influence in the new Ministry. Indeed, an enlightened intellectual like Yahya Daulatabadi was consistently debarred from obtaining employment in the one Ministry he could most appropriately have served, being recognised as one of the most rational minded and greatest teachers of the day; but apparently his religious affiliations were suspect, while his political allegiance was not at all directed towards the Bakhtiaris; although in exile in Lausanne he was constantly in the company of Nasiru'l-Mulk.

In the reformed Ministry of Justice lack of finance was to some extent offset by the use of stamp duty receipts for the maintenance of provincial offices. This Ministry also fell into the hands of the clerics, for the religious classes were the only source of trained lawyers and thus provided most of the judges. These administered Shari'a and opposed codification intended not only to provide a new civil law to replace the Shari'a in matters other than questions of personal legal status, but also the codification of '*Urf*, the customary law. The clerics were opposed also to the translation of laws into Persian from Arabic, the language of the Muslim Canon, presumably because they feared losing their lucrative specialisation. In Reza Shah's time, when legal reforms were ruthlessly enforced by the Shah and wisely administered by a great Minister of Justice, Muhammad Davar, it was still difficult entirely to dispense with clerical lawyers of the old order because the lack of sufficiently experienced men with modern training continued.

Another Ministry to receive some rise in status during the years preceding the First World War was the relatively old Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs. The Ministry of the Interior also began to assume prominence on paper and took over the functions of the former Prime Minister's office; but sufficient has been said on the state of the country for it to be evident that this Ministry would find its functions difficult even had it been adequately equipped to function at all.

The Ministry of War, on the other hand, although the gendarmerie was theoretically under the Ministry of the Interior and although no regular army could be said to exist, was, under the Bakhtiari regime, particularly prominent, notably in its repeated requests for cash, either for a regular army or to finance Bakhtiari

irregulars. A regular army did in fact exist on paper as Morgan Shuster had discovered when looking over the Ministry of War's numerous requirements, but no regular troops had been mobilised for five or six years. However, the continuation of a Ministry of War as a serious entity in the bureaucracy has significance: in 1921 it was the Ministry whose portfolio the then Reza Khan took over and used as the base upon which to build his power.

It will be realised that these Ministries, although under the Constitution vaguely responsible to the Majlis, must be regarded more as elements in a bureaucracy than as indicative of the existence of real Cabinet government. The Cabinets were short-lived, lasting on average seven months, a fact which aggravated the despondency of the Regent. The Cabinets lacked any sense of joint responsibility and were chiefly a collection of men to whom a ministry meant simply an opportunity for personal enrichment and the exercise of favouritism. A factor conducive to the short lives of Cabinets was the manner in which dismissed members of a former Cabinet set about working against whatever new Cabinet happened to be in office. These were Cabinets of rivals, comprising ministers who regarded their individual Ministry – rather on the model being set by M. Mornard and his colleagues in Finance and the Customs – as their private affair, open to the interference or criticism of no one; certainly not of Cabinet colleagues.

When Yahya Daulatabadi returned to Iran from Switzerland in 1913 after just over three years' absence, he described the country as being like a property without an owner. He had to travel half-way from the Caspian port of Enzeli (Bandar Pahlavi) to Tehran, before for the first time he saw the Iranian national flag, with its emblem of the Lion and Sun. It was flying over a small gendarmerie post alongside a Russian guard room, but the smallness of the gendarmerie post did not diminish the returned exile's joy in at last finding some signs of the continued existence of his own nation.

Chapter 13

Iran and the War

THE tenuous vestiges of independence, betokened for the returning traveller by the small gendarmerie post some sixty miles inland from the Russian-patrolled northern frontier, were cast into deeper jeopardy by the events of 1914. On the outbreak of war in Europe, involving England and Russia against Germany and Austria, Iran declared itself neutral. In internal politics the prospects for neutrality were not promising; the country lacked both an army of its own and a resolute government capable of extending its writ firmly over the whole land; and there were a number of men in the capital unaccustomed to the concept of patriotism but sufficiently accustomed to the use of foreign connections for their personal ends. Externally, the Great Powers could hardly be expected to observe an Iranian neutrality with any great scruples: the spirit of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 was not favourable to overmuch respect for declarations of neutrality from Tehran. It was the spirit in which Iran was regarded as ground to manoeuvre for power on, and in the end, the moment it suited the two contenders to remove causes of friction between them, to define spheres of influence in, each giving the other scope in his zone for the unhindered and uncriticised pursuit of economic and expansionist aims.

The expansionist aims might be called defensive, excused as necessary to guard Russian and British possessions in Central Asia and India, but to Iran they appeared as unadulterated expansions of power. The economic aims were desirable adjuncts to an imperialism not worthwhile if not profitable or, at least, possible without serious deficits being incurred for such items as defending frontiers. Solutions of the 'Persian Question' had for a long time been arranged in the light of the mutations of British and Russian political, strategic and commercial policies. When these two powers became engaged in a major international struggle with a Germany shortly to be joined by Turkey, the fate of Iran was not hard to foresee. Russia was already in effect in occupation of the northwest and part of the northern area of the country, a Russian puppet, Samad Khan of Maraghah, the Governor-General of Azerbaijan. Germany, Austria

and Turkey could not be expected to respect the integrity of a realm which their enemies had given the world a great historical example of treating, if not with utter contempt, certainly with profound political callousness. Moreover, the policy of the Central Powers included that of arousing Islam against the two Christian powers who during the past century had encroached most upon it. If Germany and Austria with their Muslim ally, Turkey, could establish contact with the Sunnite Muslims of India and Afghanistan, co-sectarians with the Ottoman Turks, Great Britain would be faced with a containment of forces which would make impossible the sending of units of her fine Indian army to the Western Front, and seriously impede her operations in Mesopotamia.

Operations at the head of the Persian Gulf, against the Ottoman provinces of Basra and Baghdad, had been embarked upon with lightning promptitude at the beginning of the war. In May 1914 advocates of the use of oil fuel in the Royal Navy had ultimately won their battle. A contract for oil supplies to H.M. ships had been concluded with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, a company which had been formed on 14th April 1909. Also in May 1914 the British Government had invested £2,000,000 in that company, thus gaining a majority voting interest in a concern which at the time stood in need of this financial stimulus.

On the assumption that Iran's mineral rights were vested in the Crown, earlier concession-hunters whose thoughts turned towards oil sought concessions from the same regal source which dispensed all concessions; and indeed before the Constitution had been granted there was no obvious alternative. Julius de Reuter obtained from Nasiru'd-Din Shah a minerals concession with the one to build railways which was granted in 1872; concessions the Shah revoked in 1873, after he had experienced the Russian expostulations and British apathy over them during his first European tour. Then a Mr. Hotz of Hotz and Company, operating in Bushire, obtained a small oil concession for a place called Daliki, forty miles northeast of Bushire. Mr. Hotz drilled to a depth of seventy feet and then gave up his enterprise. Baron Julius de Reuter's son, George, was in Tehran in 1888 negotiating the final stages of the winding-up of his father's vast concession of 1872, and in 1889 he obtained the Persian Bank Concession. By this the British Bank of Persia, known as the Bank-i-Shahi or Imperial Bank and, today, the British Bank of the Middle East, was established with the additional right to mine for certain minerals. The Shah preferred himself to farm precious metals and stones locally, as he did the Turquoise Mines at Nishapur in Khurasan. The Bank, of itself, could not directly operate its mineral

rights and so formed the Persian Bank Mining Rights Corporation for the purpose, taking over Hotz's concession.

The Bank Mining Corporation found no oil but did not go into voluntary liquidation until 1901, until which time no other concessions could be granted for oil works. Meanwhile, the *Annales des Mines* of February 1892 had carried an article by the geologist and archaeologist, Jacques de Morgan, on the oil seepages observable round Qasr-i-Shirin, on the border of Iran with Iraq. Oil here did not come into operation until many years later, however, because early drilling at Chiah Surkh near Qasr-i-Shirin failed. In 1901, once the field was again open for a new concession, Baron Julius de Reuter's former secretary, Eduard Cotte, began discussions with de Morgan and an Iranian gentleman, General Kitabji, a name since execrated in the records of his country, with a view to obtaining another oil concession. It was realised that much money would be required for exploration and exploitation, and how correct this was is proved by the fact that the concern subsequently founded, the A.P.O.C., did not declare even a small profit until 1915, though it had been in operation since 1908. Cotte, Kitabji and de Morgan found a man named William Knox D'Arcy willing to supply the money; he was a Devonian with a fortune made in gold-mining in Australia. D'Arcy sent his man, Marriott, to Tehran with the other negotiators in 1901, and a concession was gained on 28th May. The Russians protested but D'Arcy placated them by instructing Marriott to exclude from the concession area the five northern provinces of Iran. Of Iran's total area of 628,000 square miles, the D'Arcy Concession covered 480,000 and was to last for sixty years. Under Article X an exploration company was to be formed within two years from the date of signature. Thereafter the Iranian Government was to receive sixteen per cent of the profits of this company and of any companies subsequently formed from it. The only provision for forfeiture was under Article XVI, whereby the concession lapsed if the first company had not been formed within the two-year period. The Iranian Government had left itself in the position of the weaker party and the royalty arrangement of sixteen per cent on profits was a very vague one.

Great difficulties were encountered in the early stages of prospecting. Out of the story of them emerges one of those remarkable personalities British activities in the East not rarely produced. This was Mr. G. B. Reynolds, D'Arcy's chief engineer, who worked manfully for a time at Chiah Surkh before moving westward into the province of Khuzistan. Reynolds won over tribesmen, over whom the Government had scarcely any but nominal control, succoured the

sick and needy and, amidst these political and charitable concerns and expediencies, undauntedly went on drilling for oil. He did this in spite of such handicaps as salty water, unfit for human consumption and posing an ever constant danger to boilers that could only be renewed at the cost of a long sea haul and tedious carriage over hundreds of miles of some of the most arid land in the world. At last, on 26th May 1908, when, in spite of somewhat captious help from the Burmah Oil Company, D'Arcy could find no more money and had ordered Reynolds to decamp and return home, oil was struck in commercial quantities in the Number 1 Well still preserved as a museum piece at Masjid-i-Sulaiman, in the southern foothills of the Zagros Mountains.

A refinery was commissioned on the island of Abadan by 1913, the pipeline joining it to Masjid-i-Sulaiman (or Maidan-i-Naftun as it was called in those early days), 135 miles away, having been finished in 1911. The British Government contract and investment of 1914 gave the gallant enterprise a fillip which made the planning of rapid and ambitious development practicable. Iran was in the process of receiving its greatest, and most controversial, share in the Western 'Secret': on the brink of realising its greatest industrial and commercial undertaking; yet such were the workings of the 'Secret' that not for many years to come could Iran feel that this enterprise was part of its nationhood.

The installations were centred far away from the capital, in a region controlled more by the Arab Shaikhs, Jabir, Maz'al and Khaz'al in succession, of Muhammarah, than by the Imperial Government in Tehran. The oil installations were in an area where the Governor-General, in his imposing brick castle on the banks of the River Karun in the ancient city of Shushtar, was forced to come to terms with the Shaikh at Muhammarah; and forced to forgo the company of friends in other cities, Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan, which could not easily be left for the insalubrities of Khuzistan and the tropical shores of the Persian Gulf. It was thus that when in March 1951 the Iranian National Assembly nationalised the oil industry, hardly any of the politicians most responsible had ever seen the Oil Fields or what was then the largest refinery in the world; the installations whose ownership they, by one short Bill, assumed.

Hopes of rapid development after May 1914 were swiftly to give way to worry over the danger to the British Navy's oil supplies, presented by Turkish proximity in the neighbouring provinces of Basrah and Baghdad. One of the first breaches of Iran's neutrality was made by the Turkish force sent to attack the pipeline coming down from the hills and stretching out across the wide Khuzistan Plain to

Abadan; and by the British force promptly dispatched to meet this threat. While in the southwest British forces were deployed to protect the oil, in the north Russian forces already in position had to be reinforced against a Turkish invasion of Azerbaijan, and to hold the Caucasus, where the oil-fields of Baku were situated.

These initial movements of British, Russian and Turkish military units, meant that in fact Iran's neutrality had already been violated before Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik began his days in office as Prime Minister by declaring it. He has been criticised by some of his own countrymen for not coupling the adoption of the neutral course with the imposition of conditions whereby Iran might have profited from belligerents so heavily engaged in other theatres of conflict, and therefore perhaps readily acquiescent. His declaration was a negative one, giving Iran no positive advantages save the hope of non-interference. Events were moving so quickly that Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik could, in fact, hardly do more than hasten to observe the most obvious, least devious diplomatic form of making the declaration. He thus adopted the course most natural for Iran, but a course which Iran, with no national forces it could really call its own, was incapable of sustaining. It was also a course which at the end of the War, when Iran was not allowed representation at the Peace Conference, worked to her diplomatic disadvantage. Coupling this with the sufferings visited on the country before the Armistice, and in spite of the neutrality, the conclusion can only be that Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik put the country into a desperate and untenable position; and yet his hope that its neutrality would be respected can be taken as typical. It was typically Iranian to put such trust in forms, in a gesture; when there is nothing else to rely on, gestures are all that remain. During Nasiru'l-Mulk's regency there had been several feelers put out to Britain and Russia about forming a national army. In spite of insecurity in the south, to the detriment of British interests, and although mention was made of a limited force being established, nothing came of these proposals, and in Iran itself there were those who dreaded the setting-up of a strong, government-controlled army while the Bakhtiaris were still in power. Such a force might merely have served to entrench them more firmly. Russia saw to security in the north by keeping occupation forces there, and by the awe her ruthless tactics and formidable proximity continually inspired.

What had been permitted by Iran's powerful 'friends' was continuation of the Gendarmerie. The Swedish officers of this force were considered Anglophile. With the advent of the War, however, they with alacrity came out pro-German to a man. The day when Iran

could have a modern army was not to come until ten years later, when a soldier ruled the country. But then the long deferred consummation was to a great extent due to the continued presence of the Gendarmerie and the Cossack Brigade. Reza Shah himself was an officer in the latter; and even in 1914 there were a sufficient number of Iranian officers in both contingents for it to have been just conceivable that a force could be formed capable of defending the neutrality. Instead they, like so many others during the war years, became otherwise, and diversely, engaged.

At the outset there was some hope in the capital, hope based mainly on the preoccupations the war laid on the British and Russians. Iranians felt a sense of relief, bolstered by news of German victories. Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik succeeding in sending the Shah's brother, who was also the Crown Prince, to govern Azerbaijan, relieving the province of the exactions of the Russian puppet, Samad Khan. In this the old statesman succeeded in easing the Russian domination and doing what the Russians had not permitted a short time before, when the appointment of the Shah's brother to Tabriz had formed one of the requests submitted by the Court of Persia to the Tsar on the eve of Sultan Ahmad Shah's coronation. Advantage was also taken of the situation to dismiss the Belgian Treasurer-General and his foreign colleagues.

Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik, a man who commanded widespread respect, was Ahmad Shah's first Prime Minister after the coronation and the end of Nasiru'l-Mulk's reluctant Regency. If he hoped that by clinging to the life-line of neutralism he could achieve a respite for the country and bring about dissolution of foreign influence sponsored by nations now embroiled in their great contest elsewhere, then he was close in spirit to nationalist compatriots of much more extreme views than his. When Europe was compelled to go to war, many of the more enlightened Iranian nationalists, especially those to whom a foreigner, whether he were British, Russian, French, German, Austrian or Turk, was an enemy, thought that the moment of liberation had come. There were, however, others in the country, courtiers and profiteers, who contemplated the situation with some of the zest of a gambler presented with numerous fresh openings. Some would help the Allies. Others would frequent the saloons and studies of the Teuton legations, obsequiously lending their soft-voiced presence and advice to their rather harassed blond friends. Others again would hope to play the double game, flitting from one camp to another.

The coronation of the eighteen-year-old Shah in July 1914, a joyous diversion, contributed much to the spirit of optimism which

for a time prevailed in the capital of a country in such peril, and suffering from the insecurity and financial difficulties that in 1914 beset Persia. The coronation brought resumption, on 7th December 1914, of Parliamentary life, for the first time since Morgan Shuster's dismissal in December 1911. A resurgence of morale resulted, in the belief that the end of the Regency would inevitably lead to new and better things.

The optimism of more thoughtful men was, however, guarded. They were aware that among those anxious to taste the fruits of revived parliamentary life were many who had first tasted the joys and rewards of politics during the Regency. Nasiru'l-Mulk had encouraged party formation partly because of his devout belief in the British political system. But he had been unable to halt increasing depravity in political conditions and in the classes engaged in politics at a time when many of the sterner, higher patriots had fled. For, whatever Nasiru'l-Mulk's private political ideals might have been, under the Bakhtiaris, and because of his timid desire to be free of trouble-makers, liberals had been brutally hounded down. As a result some of Iran's best men were in 1914 isolated in Berlin or Paris, where in most instances they had to stay for the duration of the war. A few were later brought by the Germans to Istanboul, but they only arrived there in time to meet their friends retreating to the same city from Iran itself.

Berlin was the chief centre of the Iranian liberal and intellectual diaspora. Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh of Tabriz, whom we have mentioned already and who was one of the foremost lay figures in the Constitutional Movement, was the leader. He and his fellow exiles were joined by the great Iranian man of letters, the late Mirza 'Abdu'l-Vahhab Qazvini. Qazvini's usual abode was Paris but he was caught in Berlin by the outbreak of war. He has left a moving account of the life led in that distant western city by some of the best brains Iran has ever produced. The tragedy for Iran in 1914 was that they were in Berlin and not in Tehran. In January 1916 they began publishing a fortnightly periodical. It was named after the heroic blacksmith of Iranian legend who liberated his people from the tyranny of the monster Dahhak; the blacksmith Kaveh, whose leather apron is a symbol of Iranian freedom. This paper, which lasted through a new series until 1921, had a profound effect on the development of modern Persian literature. In its columns lessons in modern scientific technique and research were taught and it published a manifesto for a new approach to education. It fulminated against subservience to absurd superstitions and argued for a logical, rather than emotional, response to situations. But its files are read by

more Iranian students of today than they were by Iranians during the years of the First World War, for then it could only reach a few, and they were already converted: this literary activity could not mitigate the deleterious effect of the absence from Iran of the proponents of this new movement.

Their absence during the years 1914 to 1918 gave the opportunists more scope for action. Nasiru'l-Mulk's inconsistency and cowardice had resulted in intensification of political ambitions, as well as in the exile of the more honest politicians. He had on the one hand encouraged the formation of parties; on the other, his fear of trouble had impelled him to acquiesce in whatever ruthless measures against the liberal leaders the Bakhtiaris could devise. Moreover, men like Taqizadeh in the days of the first and second Majlises had been important checks on clerical encroachment. When there was no one to limit the influence of the religious element, and indeed, in the first Regent, 'Azudu'd-Daulah, a strong ally of the religious, clerical interference had become rife. In 1914 the men of the cloth were no longer of the calibre of some of the great religious leaders who had supported the Constitutional Movement. Yet from those leaders they inherited a strong clerical involvement in politics. They swarmed round the throne's young and inexperienced occupant, while the British and Russians thought it a necessary expediency to encourage them. Thus they hoisted themselves into a position from which only Reza Shah could dislodge them, some twelve years later.

In 1914 the clerics were no longer a resort of the people against the oppressions of the nobility. The Constitutional Movement had destroyed the moulds which had traditionally held and shaped political power. Political power and the rights and privileges attached to it was going free in 1914 for anyone adroit enough to obtain a share in it. Power and perquisites were what the opportunists sought, not scope to perform social and political duties for the nation. In this quest for power, the mullas and the élite were ranged together. At one time the mullas had been capable of giving the oppressed redress against the élite. Because this was no longer the case, Daulatabadi, describing conditions in 1914, remarked that 'The two corrupt groups which for centuries had been responsible for most of Iran's misfortunes . . . were now in control in a worse fashion than before'. He goes on to observe how the influence of foreigners had become a weapon in the oppressors' hands.[1]

The traditional balance of society had been shattered in other spheres also. Political power on a national level had properly be-

[1] Yahya Daulatabadi, *Hayat Yahya ya Tarikh-i-Mu'asir*, Tehran, 1952–1953, Vol. III, Chapter 29.

longed to the Crown and its chosen agents. Guilds and other groups had existed to provide the people with mutual protection and to represent them to higher authority. But as a result of the revolution groups such as these had begun to entertain confused notions of what their functions were; like the mullas they were confusing the quest for a voice in politics with the function of affording guidance and protection to those locally bound to them. The resumption of parliamentary life in 1914 and the relaxing of the Bakhtiari dominance were the occasion for a gathering of place-seekers and factions. Power had been loosed from its former bonds to such an extent that, while a large number were in pursuit of it, it eluded the grasp of all. In this more than in anything else lay Iran's great weakness during the war years. No Cabinet could survive. There were too many different factions desirous of controlling it; and it was too easy to charge unpopular governments with subordination to Russia or Great Britain, a stigma no Cabinet could withstand. To be in public life was to seek advantages. To be a Cabinet officer was to be besought to grant requests or to be slandered when failing to oblige.

There were, however, a few honest nationalists in Iran. They were members of the Democrat Party. Among them by this stage were not only intellectuals but also one or two military men. Because of the training and posts offered a few Iranians in the Gendarmerie and the Cossack Brigade, a new type of patriot was beginning to appear. But their day was not to come until after the war, when one of them took over the nation. Like the other nationalists these officers were apt to be against all foreigners, but during the war those in the Gendarmerie followed their Swedish colleagues, and many fellow-members of the Democrat Party, into the German-Turkish camp. Forming part of a large Russian army in Iran, the Iranian officers in the Cossack Brigade were unable to follow their own devices and desires until the Russian military machine began to melt away after the Bolshevik Revolution. Then Iranian Cossacks became engaged in the prolonged and complicated operation of freeing Iran from the Bolsheviks, and in this they chanced to be on the side of the British.

The British in the war years favoured the party to which the Democrats were in opposition. This other party consisted of the '*Ittidalis*, the Moderates. At this stage in Iranian experiments in democracy, interested foreigners considered the Democrats dangerous extremists. This consideration was much influenced by the uncompromising attitude of the Democrat leaders towards the British and Russians, whom they regarded as Iran's most perfidious enemies; as their emotions were stronger than their reasoning, they carried this attitude to limits which damaged their cause and their

country. They became the dupes of those who found it opportune to play upon political passions to serve private ends. They strove to attach respectable figures to the party, and there were some of the old élite ready to support them, or privately in sympathy with them if not openly so. Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik is an example. Nevertheless, the Democrats could not avoid attracting all the frustrated elements who had tried and failed to win favour and privilege from the people in power; and, whether the Democrats would have it or not, they enjoyed the services of a scurrilous press. Newspapers had proliferated in the post-revolution times. Circulation was meagre; especially in a country with a high rate of illiteracy, so that only a small section of the urban population could read. The editors were forced to apply themselves to blackmail in order to make money; or to the promotion, for payment, of dubious politicians. The third Majlis marked the serious beginning of the decline in Parliament's quality and awareness of its duties; at the same time, the still nascent Iranian press gave indications of a lapse in standards of an order which would have shocked the first reformers, had they been able to look into the future and see the results of their efforts, as much as it does the observer looking back on it. Both the immorality of the press and incompetence of the Majlis have remained to besmirch the Iranian scene until recent times; only now, over twenty years after the Second World War, are there indications that these abuses will no longer be tolerated and may be corrected.

Another reason for the ultimately negative effect of the positions which the Democrats and their descendants were forced to assume was the failure on the part of the British to establish a mutually fruitful relationship with them. To the bitterness and suspicion engendered by, first, the 1907 Agreement of England with Russia, and second, the pro-German attitude and operations of the Democrats during the First World War must this failure be in great measure ascribed. Otherwise, especially so far as the British Liberal Party was concerned, the original Democrat leaders enjoyed a great deal of British sympathy: Taqizadeh, the first time he had to flee Iran, after the bombardment of the Majlis in 1908, went straight to England, there to be given a platform, at meetings of the Anglo-Persian Society and elsewhere, and generous hospitality. There were fundamental bases for sympathy between the original liberal nationalists of Iran and their English friends. Although the latter's official compatriots were by no means as prone to sympathise with the Iranian revolutionaries as were some of their academic and non-official contemporaries – people who had no policies to implement as Civil Servants – nevertheless in the early days the Iranian progressives

tended to see in England the home of the freedom and political institutions they most desired to emulate. By 1914, however, Taqizadeh was in the German capital; in Iran itself the Democrats attacked British Consulates and were soon engaged with the help of German and Turkish officers in a minor war which, besides being tantamount to a civil war, was a war against the British and the Russians. With the latter, of course, there was never any question of the Iranian Democrats becoming aligned. This is worth bearing in mind because, among the varied political offspring whose paternity can be traced to the Democrat Party, a party whose name long ago went out of active Iranian politics, the Iranian Tudeh or Communist Party of more recent times must be included. Ultimately, except for an extreme minority, it must be assumed that this party is no more inclined for alignment with Russia than was the group of nationalist parties associated with the name of Prime Minister Musaddiq, also part of the Democrat Party's progeny.

All this progeny, and in this lies proof of their common ancestor, had two things in common, both derived from the Democrat Party: hatred of foreign intervention and suspicion of the Throne as being susceptible to foreign pressure. The Throne could be more influenced by foreigners inasmuch as one man is more easily subjected to pressure than a democratic assembly. But in the case of Musaddiq's National Front[1] and other factions not far away from it, antipathy to the foreigner and his influence tended towards a reaction ironically very far removed from the modernizing, reforming tendencies that were a marked feature of the old Democrats' ambitions. Reform was inspired by the example of the West. If the West is to be execrated, then the risk of reaction, a risk easily exploited by the mullas lying in wait for an opportunity in a world in which opportunities for men of their kind become fewer, soon makes itself apparent; it was so in Musaddiq's opposition to reforms like the Shah's proposed land reform, and in the same leader's admission, at first, of the influence of the mulla, Ayatullah Kashani.

Musaddiq is an example of an extreme position where emotion and a number of personal motives predominate: a position likely to arise in the ambivalent situation confronting Iranian nationalists who want to rid their country of foreign influence and yet at the same time profit from foreign models. But there have been a few better-disciplined minds, of whom Taqizadeh has already been singled out as an example. Such men were inevitably rare in a country which had suffered the collapse of a traditional form of

[1] The best analysis of this political element: R. W. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran*, Pittsburgh, 1964.

education – itself a dead husk for some years before the revolution – and which still lacked an adequate substitute for it. But the few who had been able to keep their heads above the heady phrases and exhortations of the Constitutional Movement, and who had, with perhaps an occasional falling-off because of the pressure of personal needs, succeeded in refraining from cupidity in times when temptations were many, knew how not to succumb to the emotional turmoil of the Iranian nationalists' ambivalent position. And in 1914 these less prejudiced, more rational men were for the most part not in the country. If they had been perhaps they would not have been able to influence events, for one of them who was, Daulatabadi, describes his situation in 1914 thus: 'Sometimes I considered coming out into the open, collecting a group of supporters and rising against the notables in power and the lazy, greedy men who had control, putting the incompetents where they belonged and handing over direction of affairs to men better suited for the task. However, the number of people jealous of me and wishing me ill, for one thing, and, secondly, the emptiness of my and my friends' purses, and lack of agreement among the better elements in the country, taught me patience and that it was more prudent to await events. Day by day it became clearer that those in power now were of the same calibre as those who were in power before. Although a relaxation in the obstructive tactics of outside agents was perceptible, . . . none the less the awe which had accompanied that obstruction still inhibited the present rulers.'[1]

During Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik's time in office as Prime Minister, from the Coronation in July until the opening of Parliament in December 1914, the general confidence he inspired made a beginning possible in the direction of reform; but the events of 1915, when the war began in earnest to divide and harry Iran, halted any positive measures an Iranian government might have wanted to adopt. Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik went out of office when the new Majlis was convened. Before doing so, he had encouraged the inauguration of an Academy of Sciences. Sincere nationalist liberals were convinced that the revolution had in large measure failed; and they ascribed this to its not having been accompanied by sufficient attention to reform in education, and to the prevailing Iranian ignorance and incapacity to think properly. The state of the Persian language was cited as symptomatic of the general absence of sound powers of discrimination. The language was now a prey to the influx of foreign words, imported by those who had gone to Europe. One of the Academy's tasks was to compile a Persian dictionary in the attempt

[1] Daulatabadi, op. cit.

to ensure some degree of linguistic stability and purity. But the march of events left no time for continuation of enterprises of this kind, even had there been money in the treasury to pay for them.

The third Majlis was not found a satisfactory platform for the Democrats because it was too packed with Moderates, and also Independents ready to shift their allegiance to whichever faction seemed temporarily to have the most to offer. British and Russian agents, in the capital and the provinces, had, it would appear, effectively influenced the elections to ensure the result they desired, but the pressures and charges brought to bear on Cabinets still made it impossible for any continuity of the government in office to be achieved, in spite of the Democrats being in the minority. This was most disturbing to the British and Russians, who were striving to establish security under Persian governments amenable to their wishes. The cultured Mushiru'd-Daulah took over from Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik, but he soon fell and for a time there was a Prime Minister in office who devotedly served the Russo-British cause, Mirza Farmanfarmayan. Then after a short interval Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik was again in power, to initiate events which surprised and alarmed the Allies.

The presence of Russian troops along the road between Qazvin and the Caspian Sea and poised ready to be brought, as soon they were, nearer the capital, made the Central Powers see that in a city subject to such pressure no government could for long act in their favour, and no Majlis make decisions of the kind they sought. During the summer of 1915, on the other hand, German agents had achieved signal success in liquidating centres of British influence in the south. Grahame, the British Consul in Isfahan, where the German Zugmeyer was operating, was wounded in an attempt on his life. The British Vice-Consul, an Indian, was slain in Shiraz in September. Finally British diplomatic representatives and bank officials were forced out of the principal southern cities, Shiraz, Kirman and Yazd, where the Russian agent, Keyer, was murdered. These reverses were accomplished either by Iranian Democrats or, as in Shiraz, by tribes, incited in both instances by a very few but quite unrelenting German agents, Seiler, Zugmeyer and Wassmus, benefiting for the time from Iranian belief that their country would be the ultimate victor in the war. For whatever Iranians may have done at the behest of the Germans during the war years cannot be so readily attributed to sympathy for the German cause as to the desire to see the end of Russian and British dominance. The essential lack of real sympathy between the Nationalists and their German allies meant that the friendship was easily subject to shocks and

entailed no sense of real loyalty. Wassmus's devotion to the tribes among whom he worked so valiantly was repaid with vile suspicion and, in the end, betrayal. From documents published after the war it is also evident that, men like Wassmus apart, many of the German agents regarded their Iranian colleagues with the utmost contempt; a contempt it is very hard to suppose the perceptive Iranians did not fathom. Ironically, the agents Iranians appear to have trusted and admired the most were, generally speaking, those who received least support from their own government in Berlin, and those whom the Turks least appreciated, for reasons which will be mentioned below.

The position, therefore, in the autumn of 1915 was that the British were practically driven out of their spheres of influence, with the exception of the southwest, where the oil company continued its operations under the protection of the army based on Basrah. But as the Russians were reinforcing their troops in the north, the capital was still highly susceptible to Anglo-Russian influence. Prince Reuss, the German Minister, saw his danger if the Russian army seized the capital and exacted retaliation for what had happened to Russian and British officials in other parts of the country. At the same time, if Prince Reuss had no Iranian government and, if Majlis there was to be, no Iranian parliament to influence, he would be of no use to his country's cause: if he left the capital, he would have to try and take the Administration with him. At this juncture Germany's purpose, so far as Iran was concerned, was primarily to use that country as an approach route for the agitation of Afghanistan and India against the Allies. German agents were to masquerade behind their Muslim-Turkish allies' representation of Islam and promote *jihad*, holy war of the Muslims against the infidels. A mission to Afghanistan had been organised under the geologist, Oskar von Niedermeyer, in Baghdad in February 1915. It had dropped disruptive elements in Iran as it progressed eastward, and the initial successes of these agents against the British in southern Persia have just been noticed.

Niedermeyer reached Kabul, the seat of the Afghan Amirs, and delivered his letters and gifts, dispatching letters to Muslim leaders in India. It was naïve to expect the Afghans to act on promises of help from remote centres of power when British power was too close not to be their first consideration. Niedermeyer's mission failed, but the heroism of his solitary marches in the deserts of eastern Iran must always excite wonder at one man's astonishing courage and perseverance. His colleague, detached to win over the tribes of southern Iran, likewise worked on an heroic scale, albeit at the unheroic task of purchasing local forces by bribery; also by promises

of future payments which perhaps a cynical Berlin bureaucracy knew could never be met, or probably never took half as seriously as the conscientious officers sent to make them did. Iranian observers were not slow to understand that there might well be a difference between the optimism and courage of individual Germans among them, and the calculations and transitory arrangements for the containment of Allied troops made by the General Staff in Berlin. After the war Wassmus went bankrupt and died in the attempt which he himself personally made to pay off some of the money he had promised the Iranian tribesmen who had helped him between 1915 and 1918.

Prince Reuss, therefore, when towards the end of 1915 he decided to leave Tehran, decided also that where he went the Iranian Government went also. For the Central Powers' representatives the situation in Tehran was becoming increasingly straitened. Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik, on again becoming Prime Minister, acted as if to make amends for his unprofitable declaration of neutrality; he first persuaded the British and Russians not to seek repayments on their loans for the duration of the war and to refund what had already been paid since the war began. But the price given for this relief was permission for the Allied representatives to arrest dangerous agitators acting in the capital on behalf of the Central Powers. Then, in November 1915, fell the month of Muharram, the month of mourning for the Shi'ite Holy Persons massacred by the forces of the Umayyad Caliphs at Kerbela. The first days of Muharram are marked by great popular excitement and tension gradually mounts so that on this occasion an opportunity always exists for political exploitation; it is especially opportune for exciting feelings against non-Muslims. Because of this, in 1915 Muharram gave the Russians an excuse to bring forces nearer to Tehran. No longer between Qazvin and Enzeli, Russian soldiers were now marching backwards and forwards along the road between Qazvin and Karaj, the latter the last main town before Tehran is reached from the west. The manoeuvres were designed to be unpredictable in order to have the worst possible effect, as rumours of troops coming nearer and then withdrawing, only to be back a day or two later, spread their ample wings among the populace of the capital. Prince Reuss had to act.

He was negotiating secretly with Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik. There was to be a secret treaty between the Government of Iran and the Central Powers, in which Iran's future independence and economic freedom from Russian and British domination were to be guaranteed. The Shah had not been brought to signing this instrument when, on the first and second days of Muharram, the Prime Minister dropped hints to a number of Majlis Deputies that they should leave

the capital and gather in the shrine-city of Qum. Travel thither by persons of note at such a religious season was by no means unusual. But what was perhaps intended as a quiet trickle of influential nationalists from the capital rapidly developed into a rush. Overnight Qum was crowded: crowded not only with those Democrats the Prime Minister had detailed to go there and form a Committee of National Defence in collaboration with the Central Committee of the Democrat Party, but also with some Moderates and merchants and ordinary folk, fleeing in fear from the capital. Many Moderates, thinking that with German victories and the failure of the first Allied action in the Dardanelles in October 1915 an Allied defeat was certain, went to Qum to be among the partisans of the winning side; or to spy on what was happening in that city. Fears that Russian brutality in Tabriz in 1911 might be repeated in Tehran, if the Russians occupied it, drove many ordinary people to Qum, as well as nationalist sympathisers in the mercantile class.

It may be thought that the voluntary dissolution of the Majlis and departure of some of its deputies would not seriously perturb the British and Russian legations, except as indicating the extent of Prince Reuss's influence. The Majlis was not in fact again assembled until after the war. What, however, did cause the legations great alarm was the news on the night of 15th November 1915 that the Shah too was going. Wearied of the repeated calls, complaints, threats, suggestions and directions of the Russian and British Ministers, and influenced by the feeling that he must somehow show himself at one with the majority feeling of younger nationalists, as well as by the advice of Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik and, no doubt, the promises of the Germans, Sultan Ahmad Shah was on the verge of following the nationalist deputies to Qum and ultimately proceeding further south to Isfahan, there to make a new capital. The Majlis could be dispensed with so far as Britain and Russia were concerned, but the Head of the State could not. Sir Charles Marling and his Russian colleague succeeded, after preliminary obstruction by pro-German Ministers, in seeing the Shah and preventing him from getting into his waiting carriage to follow the royal advance party which had already left. While collaborating with the British Envoy in his diplomatic exertions, the Russians also resorted to their habitual tactics of bringing up military units, now to Shahabad within a very few miles of the capital. From the Shah's subsequent conduct during the rest of the war it may be surmised that, during their urgent nocturnal meeting with him, the envoys made certain promises and gave certain assurances for the future. Ahmad Shah never again attempted anything so adventurous as seeking to change

his capital, to escape the proximity of the British Minister and Russian Army.

Once the Shah had decided to remain in Tehran, the scheme for setting up a government on a new, and pro-German, footing in Qum was virtually ruined. Henceforth the efforts of the British and Russian Ministers were bent on ensuring governments more completely trustworthy than Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik's two Ministries had been. In his last Cabinet, in spite of the presence of pro-Russian and pro-British members, a cabal of three had been capable of bringing matters to an extremely dangerous pitch. Efforts which followed, to trim governments to the requisite support for the Allies, cast a deep shadow of suspicion over Perso-British dealings for many years to come. This suspicion, supplemented by future acts and uncertainties, became so firm that even today many cannot free themselves from the almost instinctive assumption that only those men of whom the British approve can hold office.

Some of the exiles in Qum followed Prince Reuss, whose failure was visited from Berlin by dismissal and replacement, westwards towards Kirmanshah. There a provisional government was eventually established. The Iranian leader who emerged was Nizamu's-Saltanah Mafi, who found himself in strange circumstances, for by inclination he was Anglophile. He provides an interesting example of how a man in the democrat-nationalist camp, who never overlooked the fact that the Allies might, after all, win the war, could act. He was governor in western Iran in 1915 and was faced with no alternative but to acquiesce in German proposals that he should collect an army, of tribesmen and Gendarmerie units, of which he became the somewhat unlikely general. Raouf Bey had earlier invaded Iran at Kirmanshah and had retired at the request of the pro-Ally Prime Minister, Farmanfarmayan. But by the time Nizamu's-Saltanah was collecting his motley force in the west of Persia, the expulsion of British and Russian agents from Kirmanshah and Hamadan, the principal cities of the area and key-points on the route from Baghdad to Tehran, was an unmistakable indication of the local ascendancy of the Central Powers.

Thus the Nizamu's-Saltanah's position was extremely difficult. He was cut off from the central government, now dominated by the Allies. He had no alternative but to go forth from Burujird and begin the gradual collection of the Lur tribes, to form an army for the benefit of the German cause. His procrastination and temporising exemplify an elder Iranian statesman's capacity for acting as non-commitally as possible and keeping an eye on many possible contingencies, not all of which would readily present themselves to

foreigners who had only one object in view at a time. A man like Nizamu's-Saltanah would be slow to risk the concentration of a large tribal force and would view with anxiety their receipt of armament. But, with the German's dangerous practice of scattering gold abroad and thus arousing the unexampled cupidity of tribal khans, he may ultimately have decided that to bring them in under one organisation, which could be a means of, to some extent, controlling and dragooning them, would be the better of two evils. He showed remarkable skill as the organiser and Commander-in-Chief of an irregular army; and by concentrating it in Kurdish districts, a distance away from the homeland of many of its Lur tribal components, he dragged the latter away from areas where, armed and pampered with bribes and expectations of more, they could have terrorised the settled population round places like Burujird and Malayir to a greater extent than usual.

There is something unexpected and incongruous about this old gentleman's role, developing from being an ordinary Provincial Governor to Commander-in-Chief of an army and eventually head of a provisional government. In it he showed to a high degree the skill of an Iranian leader in modifying the effects of the actions of those more rash and impulsive than himself; the capacity of an Iranian aristocrat to offer circumscribed obedience to the powers closest to him while preserving the *status quo* just enough for no irreparable breaches to be made; for something to be left on which later to rebuild.

Nizamu's-Saltanah Mafi helped to defeat the desperate efforts of a gallant young German officer like Count Kaunitz, and to bring to nought the more calculated operations of a shrewder agent of the Central Powers like von Schueneman. Kaunitz committed suicide. The efforts to set up a provisional government in Kirmanshah resulted in a continuation of Majlis factional politics and bickering, first at Kirmanshah, then at Qasr-i-Shirin on the Iraq border. The pressure quickly brought to bear on this sector by Russian troops, sent from Qazvin to recapture Hamadan and later Kirmanshah in the Allies' interst, drove the nationalist-democrat army and 'Majlis' further towards Baghdad; while retreating ever further towards the frontier, perhaps Nizamu's-Saltaneh viewed with satisfaction a movement that was bound in the end to take out of Iran altogether this discordant provisional government of quarrelling deputies and gold-hungry tribal khans. Finally many of the renegade politicians reached the shores of the Bosphorus. By that time the Turks saw little point in the outlay their entertainment demanded.

The Turks had themselves not helped either their German allies or the Iranian nationalists any more than decency required. As

Nizamu's-Saltanah was loath to see Lur tribes armed and assembled as a fighting force, so the Turks appear to have been averse to the strengthening of Kurdish and Lur tribes on their border with Persia; and, indeed, to the strengthening, be it in the cause of the Central Powers or not, of Iran generally.

Once the road through the Balkans had been opened, Iranian nationalists hoped that a flood of promised German supplies would reach them unimpeded, directly from Berlin through Turkey to Iran. Then all would be set fair to drive the British and Russians out of their country. The flood never came; the Turks wanted help in Mesopotamia and did not appear to want to facilitate the forwarding of equipment to the clutching hands stretched out from the divided concourse gathered round Kirmanshah. Enver Pasha in Baghdad seems to have had no delusions about the lack of unity among the Iranian nationalists who were being driven towards him, and, throughout, German-Turkish co-operation in dealing with the Iranian insurgents lacked harmony and engendered suspicion.

The Iranian nationalist effort against the Allies ended in fiasco. The detailed history of it provides lessons in the failure of Iranian politicians to unite, and in the skill of one or two old Iranian aristocrats in taking advantage of this. Also emerging from the insurgent movement at Kirmanshah was the capacity of a new type of man to assume control and establish some sort of command, with the support of a man like Nizamu's-Saltanah, always ready to act on the side of preserving the vestiges of security. In the light of Iran's post-war history, one of the most interesting personalities to come to the fore at Kirmanshah in 1916 was an officer in the Gendarmerie called Muhammad Taqi Khan Tabrizi. Nizamu's-Saltanah would not allow the German Colonel Papp the right of himself appointing this man as military commander of the district; the dignity and independence of the Iranian governor had to be protected and the foreigner's orders were rescinded, Muhammad Taqi being appointed in due form by his own people, and appointed, it may be supposed, in accordance with Nizamu's-Saltanah's own wishes. For the extravagance of the Germans, in promises and distributing money, had aroused the greed of the local leaders to an alarming degree. The provisional government needed a patriotic and selfless officer to bring the tribes to order. What Muhammad Taqi Tabrizi tried to do, before the arrival of the Russians drove him and his nationalist friends out of the country, was on a regional scale what another officer, this time of the Cossack Brigade, was going to do later on a national scale; and, as we shall see, Reza Khan had among other things to decide the issue between himself and Taqi Khan.

The efforts of the nationalists in the west during the First World War is also of interest in providing another example of how a brake was put on extremer views, and the Democrats rebuffed once again. They were similarly overpowered in other regions. The Allies restored their position in the east, at Kirman, and in Khurasan. The southern and eastern regions were eventually disciplined by a force of local levies raised and commanded by Sir Percy Sykes, founder of the South Persian Rifles, a police force for the old British zone under the 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement. But as the aspirations of the Democrats were not realised they went underground, to issue in later years in a variety of guises. Whatever the variety, the recurrences of nationalist activities always had an anti-British tinge in common. With the collapse of the Russians following the Bolshevik Revolution, the British were left alone in the field. Then the whole of Iran's western frontier became their concern and they were therefore compelled to rescue the Cossack Brigade and employ it for the purpose of preventing a Turkish breakthrough. Western Iran also became the corridor for operations in the Caucasus; operations whose objective switched from opposition to German-Turkish penetration of that region to supporting the White Russian movement there.

So far as the history of Iran is concerned, the British attempt to hold Baku, under Major-General Dunsterville, who left Baghdad in February 1918 with only two hundred men and a few officers, was incidental. It was, however, an incident which served to keep western Iran on the map of British imperial strategy. It also resulted in the establishment of a British military headquarters in Qazvin. From Qazvin in February 1921 was launched the *coup d'état* that was to lead to Iran's regeneration and reunification under Reza Shah. Imperial strategy was at first concerned with Turkish and German designs in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The defeat of the Turks in Mesopotamia and Arabia had not halted the resistance of that dogged military nation. Deprived of its Arabian possessions, some of Turkey's officers looked across the Black Sea, over the Caucasus and the Caspian to the Muslim peoples beyond, in the Central Asian regions that had been the Turkish homeland in ages past. Thus India was still threatened, for the theory had so long been held, that what happened in Khiva or Bukhara affected the guardianship of India, that it was now an article of faith. Moreover Germany had plans for the Caucasus; Germany wanted to make sure of oil supplies from Baku.

The collapse of the Tsarist regime left the whole area, from the east coast of the Black Sea to the remotest regions of Transcaspia, in a ferment. When the Tsar abdicated in March 1917, no part of the

Imperial Russian domain was more stirred by the revolution than the Caucasian border area. The democratic agitation out of which the revolution had grown had, after all, to a great extent originated in this region. But it was also here that the separatist movement started. With this suggestion of separation from metropolitan Russia, separation as the unwelcome response to early Bolshevik proposals of autonomy within a federation, scope was given to the Germans and Turks to mount expeditions to the Caucasus. A supplementary agreement to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed between Germany and Russia, in Berlin in August 1918, which gives a clue to what the Germans wanted. Under it the Soviet Government agreed to Germany recognising Georgia as a separate state, and to facilitate supplies of Baku oil to the Germans. It is interesting to note that the German scruples on this occasion about the independence of small states evoked a caustic comment from Trotsky about the position of Belgium. Meanwhile there were the Muslim tribes of Central Asia with the Amirate of Bukhara, still independent, a potential base for Pan-Turkish movements, making the whole wide Transcaspian region a field for Turkish military enterprise. The élite of Iran could view this situation, affecting the long border of their country with the area in question, with no more equanimity than could those strategists and politicians of England whose minds were dominated by India, and the splendours and difficulties of British nineteenth-century policies in the East.

In Iran, however, it was only the élite who watched these events with concern, for in 1918 the plight of the Iranian people was such that no threat could impress so impoverished and harried a population, to whose misery this year added famine. Turks were again in occupation of Azerbaijan. Their puppet, Majdu's-Saltanah, reigned over the province while the Crown Prince was a politely treated and studiously ignored prisoner in his palace at Tabriz. In south Persia some order had been re-established by the South Persian Rifles and herculean efforts were being made by British officers to secure grain supplies and prevent profiteering and extortion – an act which spread antagonism to the name of Britain far beyond the immediate sphere of the Democrats into that of the profiteers. In the west, famine and troop movements – the withdrawal and chaotic break-up of the Imperial Russian Army among them – devastated the country between Qazvin and the Iraq border. Murder and rapine were a feature of the road from Khanaqin to the Caspian. This was the road along which Dunsterville's troops and forty odd trucks had to proceed, with orders to have as little to do with the internal situation of Iran as possible. The force's objective was Baku. With such

a situation in western Iran, the question was chiefly one of negotiating a passage through to the Caspian as speedily as possible and folding up the line of communication with Baghdad as the force went forward. To the Persian people, the Dunster Force was just another foreign troop. As far as the Persian Government was concerned, now no shred of the fiction of neutrality remained for the matter of frontier violation to be raised.

Famine in the west, the South Persian Rifles at last more or less in command of the situation in the south, the Turks in Azerbaijan – this left two important areas unaccounted for, the province of Gilan and the northeastern region. The British had taken care of the latter. Early in the war a 'Cordon Sanitaire' as it was termed had been established from India along the eastern border of Iran, as a last net in which to catch Germans attempting to infiltrate Afghanistan. This lengthy and sparsely set-out chain of frontier posts had kept communications open with Meshed, the capital of Khurasan, and was strengthened when Kirman in the southeast had again become habitable for British representatives. The railway had been extended from Quetta a few miles into the Iranian border at Zahedan in Persian Baluchistan. With the help of units of the Indian Army and, later, of the South Persian Rifles, the power radiating from the Consular Posts at Kirman and Meshed had Eastern Iran under control.

The case of Gilan was startlingly different in as much as it was the one region of Iran at this time controlled, not certainly by the Central Government, but at least by Iranians, albeit rebels. The Jangalis derived their name from the jungle or woodlands of the Caspian area. They were led by one of the patriots of the Constitutional Movement who had not sought refuge in Berlin but stayed at home. His name was Kuchik Khan. When Dunsterville reached the Manjil Gap, which is the entrance through the Alburz Mountains from the buff-coloured expanses of the Persian Plateau into the green swamps and forests of Gilan, he met an Iranian force under Kuchik Khan's leadership and possessing the formidable advantage of a wooded and marshy terrain into which to retire and from which to make sorties. After a stiff engagement with the Jangalis, Dunsterville was able to make arrangements whereby he could reach the Caspian without hindrance. Thus he could have the port of Enzeli as his forward base for the attack on Baku. His Baku expedition was short-lived, but Kuchik Khan's story is a longer one and will be taken up in the next chapter, in connection with the rise of Reza Shah.

It is now necessary to see what was happening in the capitals of Iran and Great Britain during the years 1918 and 1919, to see how the British were proposing to take advantage of being temporarily

rid of their Tsarist Russian rivals on the Persian scene; and how they were proposing to meet future Bolshevik Russian ambitions in that country. At Brest-Litovsk, in the afternoon of 22nd December 1917, the Bolsheviks had not only been confronted by von Kuehlmann; they had also met his Turkish and Iranian advisers. Von Kuehlmann was born in Constantinople, of an old German Levantine family. He was deeply interested in the oriental aspects of the negotiations with which the German Government had entrusted him. He adhered to the demands of the Iranian exiles in insisting that Russia evacuate Iran and give up all Tsarist concessions and privileges there. Article VII of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty echoes the spirit of that secret agreement Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik and, at a later stage, the provisional Iranian nationalist government at Kirmanshah had endeavoured to conclude with the Central Powers: 'In view of the fact that Persia and Afghanistan are free and independent states, the contracting parties undertake to respect the political and economic independence and the territorial integrity of these states.' On 14th January 1918, Trotsky, as Commissar for Foreign Affairs, told the Iranian representative in Petrograd that the Bolsheviks no longer considered the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 binding and were ready to cancel all special privileges granted by Iran to former Russian governments.

In the meantime, on 12th January, Bravin had arrived at Tehran as unofficial representative of the new Russian government. He brought with him the first of the conciliatory notes, this one from Lenin, to the Persian Government; notes which were to pave the way to the treaty signed between Iran and Russia in 1921. These notes were documents of apology for past Russian misdeeds in Iran; of promises of compensation; of encouragement, not to say incitement, of the Iranian Democrats against the British. A propaganda was in this way initiated in Tehran which made the position of Anglophile Iranian politicians dangerous, with the risk of attack and murder, and uncomfortable because of the slanders and condemnations of a vociferous press. The Democrat newspapers took up the Russian gestures with gusto. This did not mean that Iranians were deceived by the show of generosity from the new Russian Government; and offers of compensation were only offers of what Iran considered its just entitlement; but the new Russian propaganda, while received with the inner cynicism it deserved, was ostentatiously taken up as a stick with which to flay the British.[1]

[1] On the point of Iranians not being deceived by the propaganda of Bravin, see Nasrollah Fatemi, *Diplomatic History of Persia 1917–1923*, New York, 1952, p. 139.

It served as a portent to the British Government, and Lord Curzon made haste to inaugurate a plan whereby Iran could be pacified, reformed, financed, given a national army, furnished with railways – in short, revived in order not to become a corridor for Soviet propaganda aimed at India, and in order to become economically sound and a useful, well-adjusted partner of Britain in Asia. The mandate conception was in the air, a most convenient scheme by which strong (and recently victorious) nations could shelter and develop weaker ones without, it was hoped, incurring either the odium or the costs of colonization. In the case of Iran, however, the arrangement was not to be left to the risky apportionment procedures, in which France and the United States would no doubt have a voice, envisaged under the League of Nations Charter. Instead, Great Britain was to step quietly into the paramount position in Iranian affairs by, as it were, private treaty, the arrangement being concluded without the interference of France and America. It was to be an arrangement between two old partners who knew each other well, and knew what was best for each other.

Iran was prevented from participating in the Versailles Peace Conference and a straw in the wind, not lost on Lord Curzon, was the American chagrin over the Persian delegation's exclusion. The delegation's chances were not improved by some of the wild claims it put forward. They included a demand that the River Oxus be recognised as Iran's frontier in Central Asia. Historically this could be justified; Samarqand and Bukhara had been the cradles of the revival of Persian civilisation in the ninth and tenth centuries. In both cities the Persian language is spoken. But such a claim, in 1919, coupled with the equally romantic notion that Iran's western and southern extent should end only at Diarbekr and Mosul and should reach the Euphrates, thus restoring the empire of the Sasanids, introduced an element of absurdity into the delegation's business. Yet the delegation comprised men like 'Ali Khan Furughi and Husain 'Ala: it is to be questioned how far these sensible Iranian politicians and men of affairs had been influenced, in including claims of this sort, by advisers who may have intended later correction by ridicule. The other claims were more reasonable and of more immediate validity: abolition of consular courts and consular escorts; abrogation of the 1907 Agreement; reparations for war damage; freedom from concessions.

Mr. Lloyd George said he understood that Mr. Balfour was opposed to Persia's admission to the Peace Conference but did not know the reasons. President Wilson was much exercised. The United States press was highly critical. The Shah was telegraphing encour-

agement to his representatives in Paris. But by June 1919 the cat was out of the bag, whatever Mr. Lloyd George had known or not known in April and May. An Anglo-Iranian Agreement had been formulated. The Shah had wavered sufficiently to appoint his cousin, Prince Firuz, Foreign Minister, leaving Mushaviru'l-Mulk, the original holder of this portfolio, stranded and uninstructed in Paris. The British had sent Sir Percy Cox from Baghdad to Tehran, and Sir Percy had for many years been Resident in the Persian Gulf and was an expert of the old school in oriental affairs, a man of energy and, as had been so many of those political officers in the British service in India responsible for many grave blunders during the nineteenth century, chiefly qualified in his earlier rise to high office by his command of oriental languages. Prince Firuz was considered amenable. He seems to have been made promises, of protection (this fact came out later when he was being tried by his country) and perhaps of a general prospering of his personal circumstances. He was, however, not alone with the British in the transactions of the summer of 1919, and the question of what he expected to gain from them is no longer of importance. Besides Prince Firuz there was the young Shah. Behind both these young and relatively inexperienced Princes was an older and much more mature statesman, Hasan Khan the Vusuqu'd-Daulah, the Prime Minister.

Vusuqu'd-Daulah was certainly a statesman: few men in modern Iranian politics deserve this title better than he and his brother, Qavamu's-Saltanah. Their family was not untainted by allegations of corruption but, whatever public or private dictates may have influenced Ahmad Shah and Prince Firuz, there can be no doubt that Vusuqu'd-Daulah, whose name is still heavily tarnished with the ill-fame of it, was prompted to seek conclusion of the Anglo-Persian Agreement by what he believed would be best for his country.

Iranian passions were so deeply aroused in antipathy to an instrument advertised by its adversaries, domestic and foreign, as forcing 'a virtual Treaty of protectorate upon the Shah', as making of him a British agent, as turning 'Persia into a vassal State' and pegging out 'another Imperial claim', that the storm has never quite subsided; the matter is still discussed among older men in Tehran or referred to by younger as an example of British perfidy, so that it is with some surprise that the student beholds the text to find that it is neither impractical nor unreasonable.

The Agreement Hasan Khan Vusuqu'd-Daulah signed on behalf of his country in August 1919 included, as usual, Britain's undertaking to respect Iran's independence and territorial integrity. It promised 'to supply, at the cost of the Persian Government, the services of

whatever expert advisers may, after consultation between the two governments, be considered necessary for the several departments of the Persian administration'. These advisers were to be engaged on contracts and given adequate powers, 'the nature of which shall be a matter of agreement between the Persian Government and the advisers'. It agreed to supply, at Persian Government cost, officers and munitions and modern equipment 'as may be judged necessary by a joint commission of military experts, British and Persian, which shall assemble forthwith for the purpose of estimating the needs of Persia, in respect of the formation of a uniform force which the Persian Government proposes to create for the establishment and preservation of order in the country and on its frontiers'. Then, to finance these projects, 'the British Government offers to provide or arrange a substantial loan for the Persian Government, for which adequate security shall be sought by the two governments in consultation on the revenues or the Customs or other sources of income at the disposal of the Persian Government. Pending completion of negotiations for such a loan the British Government will supply on account of it such funds as may be necessary for initiating the said reforms'. Urgently aware of the need for improved communications in Iran, the British Government 'with a view both to the extension of trade and the prevention of famine, are prepared to co-operate with the Persian Government for the encouragement of Anglo-Persian enterprise in this direction, both by means of railway construction and other forms of transport; subject always to the examination of the problems by experts and to agreement between the two Governments as to the particular projects which may be most necessary, practicable and profitable'. Also, the two governments agreed to set up immediately a joint commission to examine and revise the existing Customs tariff 'with a view to its reconstruction on a basis calculated to accord with the legitimate interests of the country and to promote its prosperity'. A later provision was for a loan of £2,000,000, at a rate of interest, payable monthly, of 7 per cent. This and other later loan arrangements removed some of the gloss from the first Agreement; and yet the spirit of the Agreement was fair; while it was not surprising that Iranian nationalists should object to it, it is somewhat baffling to understand why the United States of America should have found the Agreement so inimicable to Iran's interests.

Perhaps, however, the actual document was deceptive, the purpose behind it being to make certain that, if not the only voice, Britain's was to be, so far as external powers were concerned, the supreme voice in Iranian affairs. Also, it was designed to ensure that

Iran should prosper, but prosper in tutelage to Great Britain, the country Curzon honestly believed was the best country, the God-sent country, for securing the well-being and safety of Persians. The Agreement envisaged a state of affairs very similar to that which came about after the Second World War when American officials, civil and military, under Point Four or from the Pentagon, were everywhere to be seen in Iran, behind desks in various departments and out in the countryside, advising and endeavouring to assist. The makers of the 1919 Agreement no doubt failed to foresee the type of failures this later American effort encountered; and the parallel is only the superficial one of a ubiquity of American advisers sitting in chairs in the early 1950's which it was anticipated in 1919 would be occupied by British officials.

In 1919, however, the Iranian people did not permit this to come about. There was opposition in the British Parliament, too, and apathy among the war-weary British people, who shared neither Lord Curzon's love of Iran nor his enthusiasm for the retention of power in the Orient. The American opposition continued unabated and Husain 'Ala, sent as Iranian envoy to Washington, pressed Iran's case for avoiding the predominance of any single Great Power in its affairs, as this would assuredly excite the suspicion of others, notably Russia, and thereby jeopardise his country; an interesting and skilful argument which deftly ignored the fact that much of the Agreement's inspiration was the desire to ensure Iran's protection against Russia.

In Iran itself the Agreement had to be ratified by Parliament, according to that Constitution which at times clearly had its uses. The British Foreign Office did not relax its efforts to secure the Agreement's passage. Nor did it give up hope that it could be effected. The Office's representatives in Iran did their duty well, whatever they may have privately thought. This official persistence in a policy which, as daily became more and more apparent, was terribly misconceived, produced two untoward results. It has been stated that whether or not Prince Firuz expected, or accepted, some form or other of inducement for his support of the Agreement is unimportant. But it is important in one respect for, whatever the truth on this sordid issue may be, the fact is that the Iranian public thought the worst. Thus one result of the negotiations in 1919 was that Great Britain became associated in the minds of Iranians, not so much with a Treaty they had been taught was a wicked instrument to shackle them, but with a small group of men they regarded as traitors; the hated élite who had captured the Persian Revolution; who had ousted the Democrats; who kept their backs warm at the hearths of

powerful foreigners; who always seemed to be there, in charge, whatever struggles may be made against them. Iranian opposition to the Agreement and to the British was, therefore, an expression of political frustration. The fairness or otherwise of the Treaty was of no account in such a situation. Neither was the honesty of Iranian negotiations, except in so far as their characters were painted black in order further to damage the characters of their British counterparts.

British loyalty to Prince Firuz, once the British government had become committed to him, was, naturally, inevitable; but loyalty to one who was exceedingly unworthy, or exceedingly susceptible, as the Prince was, to being shown as unworthy, is dangerous. The agents which British policy selected – perhaps because no better could be found ready to do what was required – were unfortunate choices.

The second evil result, from the point of view of Britain's future relations with Iran, was that, to make sure of the Agreement's ratification by the Majlis, Vusuqu'd-Daulah had to resort to corrupt elections. The Fourth Majlis was the subject of a long satire by the poet 'Ishqi; a satire in the form of a popular dirge, with the refrain 'Did you see what it was all about?', describing the Assembly as, among other things, a collection of 'asses riding on the backs of asses'. But graver than the satirist's mockery is the fact that once again, and in a manner more flagrant than before, Iran's young parliamentary institution had been brought into disrepute. The irony that this should have been occasioned by a proposed treaty between Iran and Great Britain, the home of parliaments, is indeed great. It immediately strengthened Iranian suspicion that British diplomats could influence not only the selection of cabinets, but also the election of deputies.

One of the criticisms of the Agreement which may be considered outside the more hysterical realm of general political frustration was that its provision for exclusively British advisers ruled out the traditional Iranian system of seeking safety in advisers recruited internationally, preferably from smaller nations. Another argument against the Agreement was that it would have had the effect of wedding Iranian trade to British. The mentality of the bazaar merchant was far removed from that of the child of Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire, and hardly less so from that of his aristocratic Iranian colleague, Vusuqu'd-Daulah. Critics accused Vusuqu'd-Daulah of treating Iran as if it were his private estate, to be disposed of as he saw fit. Both he and Lord Curzon were anachronistic, but the reference to 'private estates' might also, in opposition to the critic's intention, be made in Vusuqu'd-Daulah's defence. For the patriotism

of an Iranian of his calibre did just rest on this, the concern of an aristocrat who has a stake in the land and a belief in his responsibility, as well as right, to protect and decide what is best for its people. Here Vusuqu'd-Daulah and Lord Curzon were on very much the same ground; only Curzon looked away from home and believed that he too had a mission to decide what was best, not for the people of England, but for those of Persia. The mercantile circles of Iran were so far from these aristocratic presumptions as to be once more on the side of the Democrats and Nationalists. No merchant wants his clients and trading possibilities to be decreed and limited for him by a treaty that denies scope for the broader quest of opportunity.

Throughout 1920 the British Government persisted in believing that ratification of the Treaty would be feasible and every effort continued to be made to this end. The fêting of Prince Firuz in London in the autumn of 1919 was a disastrous tactical error, exciting to fever pitch Iranian hatred of the Agreement. But, and here it is necessary to return to a matter already touched upon, Firuz Mirza was a very polished young man who spoke good French and with whom a foreigner could converse easily: the allusion is once again to the dangers that beset the stranger in his selection of friends in Iran, if all he is seeking are agents to forward his intentions towards that country. The urbane Iranian man of influence, with his readiness to consort with foreigners and tell them gossip and flatter them, has played a conspicuous part in his country's relations with the outside world. But for every one such Iranian there are many, also intelligent, educated and patriotic, whom the stranger never sees because they do not go out of their way to see him, and may not speak his language, and will certainly cultivate the reticence which, in the company of strangers, is a national feature.

Firuz's banqueting preceded the Shah's state visit to England in October and November 1919. The Shah was very unhappy. His childhood experiences of his father's embroilment with the Constitutionalists and the circumstances of his own accession to the throne made him extremely sensitive to public opinion, and he had inherited his father's dread of the Press. After the speeches of Lord Curzon and Prince Firuz in September, opposition in Iran had mounted sharply enough to cause the Shah great consternation. In replying to King George V's speech at Buckingham Palace, the Shah simply said: 'La cordiale réception qui m'a été faite ici me donne la conviction que l'avenir réserve aux relations entre nos deux empires et nos peuples une ère de bonne entente et de veritable amitié, bassée sur des interêts communs et sur respect mutuel' – with no reference

to the Agreement. This omission was repeated in the reply to Lord Curzon at the Guildhall. Firuz had to work very hard and there was a long meeting between the Shah and his advisers – Nasiru'l-Mulk, the former Regent, advising against His Majesty explicitly mentioning the Agreement – before Firuz at last won: at the Foreign Office Banquet, the Shah finally satisfied Lord Curzon by mentioning his 'cordial acceptance' of the Agreement.

Under the provision for the loan, the first instalment was to be paid on the installation in Tehran of the British financial adviser. Mr. Armitage-Smith went to Iran in this capacity and by February 1920 the military adviser, Major-General Dickson, was also there, as well as the Customs revision committee under Sir Herbert Llewellyn Smith. But American opposition, French indignation and the fear of Russia were continuing to have their effect. Moreover, economy at home compelled the British, who were largely out of sympathy with Lord Curzon's Persian policy, to withdraw most of their units from northern Iran. This, while heightening the fear of Bolshevik invasion and so driving the Iranians to thinking in terms of seeking military aid, not from Britain, but possibly from America,[1] also made the execution of the Agreement less likely. For it had come to this that, to ensure ratification, the presence of strong British forces would doubtless be necessary.

The Communist Congress of Eastern Peoples, held at Baku in September 1920, turned, in the words of Zinoviev, 'today to the peoples of the East, saying: Brothers, we summon you to a holy war, first of all against British Imperialism . . . China, India, Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and Armenia . . . can and must try their best to obtain a Soviet system'.

The effect of proclamations of this kind was somewhat diminished by the fact that the Bolshevik Government was, in its economic plight, engaged in negotiations with Great Britain at the time; and that there was still much confusion about the Russian Soviet's position in relation to the Asiatic Republics, while the Baku Congress was recognised by the Russian Government or disowned by it as that government found expedient. A similar tactic was resorted to a short time afterwards in connection with events in northern Iran. Northern Iran was invaded by Russian troops in May 1920, but the invasion could, when necessary, be disowned by the Soviet Government. However, when it began it was directly related to Russia's economic difficulties. These difficulties made a diversion necessary to keep high the spirit of the revolution. They also made the acqui-

[1] See Report of the U.S. Minister at Tehran, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1921, Vol. II, pp. 633–634.

sition of commodities available in Iran the more pressing. North Iran exports fish, rice and cotton to Russia and is a source of supply which Russia needs. Whatever importance Iran may have to the U.S.S.R. as a potential political arena, this economic attraction remains fundamental in Irano-Soviet relations.

The invasion of Gilan could not be overlooked by England. The depleted British forces in Iran could offer no resistance, nor any aid to the Persian Government, which hastened to ask for military aid from Britain. The invasion suddenly awoke the British public to the folly of expecting a successful outcome to the negotiations for the Agreement. British help was not forthcoming to save Iran from invasion, in spite of British claims to be Iran's only legitimate protector. This was the death of the Treaty. Mr. Bonar Law read the extraordinary epitaph when on 22nd May he said in the House of Commons that 'His Majesty's Government was under no obligation under the Anglo-Persian Treaty to defend Iran'. Vusuqu'd-Daulah was thus abandoned and Lord Curzon and his policy repudiated. New schemes had to be resorted to, both by Iranians for their self-defence and by the British, to preserve what they could of their shattered prestige in Iran.

Chapter 14

The Rise of Reza Shah

As we have seen, when a number of deputies and politically influential men left Tehran in November 1915 and the Shah was persuaded by the Russian and British envoys to stay there, the country's political structure fell into disunity. Disunity is a marked tendency in Iranian politics and to ascribe it to the individualism of Iranians is to take the symptom for the malady. Under the Safavid Shahs and again during the Qajar settlement, or pacification, of the country, some degree of national unity was achieved. In both instances it was when a strong central government existed. During the reign of Reza Shah, from 1925 to 1941, national integration was again accomplished, again under a strong leader. It has also been seen that united action was possible from the community at large, as in the movement against the Tobacco Concession in 1892 and in the Constitutional Movement. In these instances the unity was not wrought by a strong government at the centre or by a dictator. It stemmed from the combination of groups which normally maintained separate relations with the central power, which they balanced but at the same time supported. When these groups acted in concert, their prestige and command of the peoples' emotions ensured control of the situation. Clergy, merchants, members of the aristocracy and intellectuals momentarily united against the Crown. Prestige was the possession of the first three and these could also manipulate the emotions of the people more effectively than could the intellectuals. The latter were the weakest component in the coalition and were soon isolated and in flight. Too late, the intellectuals realised that the ground for strong general support for their aims had not sufficiently been prepared by education. Theirs, however, was the idealism which the other members of the combination lacked; only the intellectuals had the disinterested patriotism and desire for progress which might have produced the loyalty and steadiness of purpose necessary for this temporary cohesion of forces to endure. Clergy, merchants and aristocrats were only in the movement to protect their own class interests. Their unity was short-lived.

The clash of group interests is one of the disunifying factors and it is associated with regionalism, the size of the country and the insularity consequent upon poor communications. Geographically, the outward orientation of perimeter regions, looking away from the dead centre of Iran, has already been mentioned. The south looked towards India and the Persian Gulf; the north, towards Russia. The positive links with the outside were economic. Negatively fear, and sometimes hope, directed attention to other countries. There was the fear of invasion; but sometimes also the hope of an external force that would come and modify the authority of an extortionate central government. When the Constitutionalist forces converged on Tehran in 1909, from Tabriz and Isfahan, the people had looked again within, to the capital. When the Democrats and a number of Moderates were wooed away from Tehran by Prince Reuss in 1915, such unity as had remained from the Constitutional Movement disappeared. What followed was the provisional government based on Kirmanshah in the west; Majdu's-Saltanah's rule under the Turks in Tabriz; British control in the south and east; and Kuchik Khan's operations in Gilan.

This situation could be compared to the rise of *muluku't-tavayif*, literally, sectional or regional kings, a recurring phenomenon of Persian history whenever the central government was ineffective. In other words, when Reza Shah seized power, the Iranian Empire was fragmented. His task was to give meaning once more to the title of King of Kings, Shahanshah. He came on to the scene at a time when the centrifugal forces of Iranian society were in the ascendancy over the centripetal. In discussing the indications of the prevalence of the former, that is to say, Iranian tendencies towards disunity, the existence of the latter must not be forgotten. Had there not always been strong centripetal tendencies as well, Iran would long ago have remained perpetually dismembered.

Where the means of subsistence, in water and pasture, are restricted, communities tend to spread in order to gain access to as much land as possible. Pastoral tribes tend to confederate under a strong leader who can assure them the widest possible access to fruitful districts. The first requisite is the strong leader. A concourse under his banner follows and then, inevitably, there is expansion. Once one of the sectional leaders became well established in his home base, he began to dream of wider dominion. The Qajar tribal leaders' original base was round Astarabad, near the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea. They ended as Emperors of all Iran, having established the present capital as their centre. The position of the centre, after total dominion had been gained by a regional leader, depended on his choice and upon whence he derived his initial strength. The

Safavids first selected Tabriz, near to their homeland in the vicinity of Ardebil in Azerbaijan. Turkish pressure and their decision to look inwards and achieve sovereignty over the whole of Iran directed them thence to Qazvin and ultimately Isfahan. The choice of Isfahan spelt the acme of their dominion; its position is more nearly central than that of any other of Iran's ancient capitals. The Zands retained Shiraz as their base, commanding the southern and eastern regions which were in fact all that they could indubitably consider within their jurisdiction. The Qajars were northern based: their capital was as nearly central as it could be without being too far away from their original home. Muhammad 'Ali Shah's last stand against the Constitutionalists was, it will be recalled, at Astarabad, where he chose to land on his return from Odessa.

The object of this short historical review is to show that regional leaders tended, after becoming locally established, to move towards complete sovereignty by defeating other regional forces, their rivals: tended to aim at possession of the whole once they had secured a part. And in 1921 there were three such potential unifiers of Iran. There was Kuchik Khan in Gilan. There was that patriotic Gendarmerie officer we have met in the preceding chapter, Colonel Muhammad Taqi Khan, now in Khurasan. Finally there was a Cossack officer named Reza Khan. He was clever enough to establish himself in what had become the traditional centre of the country, Tehran.

The three potential unifiers were also the potential saviours of a distracted and despairing nation, which demanded the security only a strong central government could provide, against external aggression and civil war at home.

The motives of regional leaders moved to act by the splintering of central power were not always as patriotic as those of Kuchik Khan, Taqi Khan and Reza Khan. These men were not solely opportunists, but it is difficult to exclude from this head the Qajar Governor, Sarimu'd-Daulah, in Kirmanshah. He plotted with his relative, Prince Firuz, when the latter passed through Kirmanshah on his return from Europe in June 1921. Their decision was that the moment might soon come for them to make a bid for control of the state. They probably thought that they could rely on British support. Their purpose might not have been entirely selfish, but their scheme could only have been designed ultimately to protect the interests of their family and its supporters. Other and quite unmitigated opportunists were the bandit leaders whom Vusuqu'd-Daulah had succeeded in suppressing. Nayib Husain of Kashan and his son, Mashallah Khan, in 1919 and 1920 terrorised the roads to and from their native city, while a Reza Jauzani and Ja'far Quli were terroris-

ing the vicinity of Isfahan. The Vusuqu'd-Daulah's capacity for ameliorative action was proved by his skill in bringing in these outlaws. His successor, as Prime Minister, Mushiru'd-Daulah, likewise accomplished the suppression of Khiabani's movement in Azerbaijan. Thus some of Reza Khan's task of suppression and unification had been performed for him before he assumed power. To him was left the final liquidation of Kuchik Khan's movement as well as the subduing of the Kurds who had risen under 'Simko', Simetgou. He also had to deal with the Shaikh of Muhammarah.

This is briefly to review the principal forces of disunity in the field before Reza Khan rose to power. He did so in response to the challenge they presented in addition to the challenge of external dangers. The latter were present in the shape of the Bolshevik invasion and the British occupation – the arrival of the Bolsheviks and the threatened withdrawal of the British precipitated events.

Major-General Dunsterville had originally only sought access to the Caspian. Subsequently the urgent necessity to fill the gap left in western Iran by the melting away of the Russian Army had been met by forces under Sir William Marshall. At the same time the threat to India posed by enemy operations in Central Asia was met by a strengthening of the British position in Khurasan under Sir Wilfred Malleson. Neither of these operations was concerned with Iran's internal situation. The protection of India was the paramount object. Iran's internal problems would, it was hoped, be settled by having Vusuqu'd-Daulah as Prime Minister, the stage attained in August 1918, and by the conclusion of the Agreement, the preliminaries to which were completed a year later. The Agreement when effective would make withdrawal of British forces possible, taking place concurrently with the building up of an Iranian army with British advisers and the organisation of a stable administration and economy under British guidance. The hitch occurred when the conclusion of the Agreement was blocked by popular pressure against it and the Bolshevik invasion of the north found British forces already too depleted to take action.

Kuchik Khan was the leader who became involved in the biggest threat with which the Persian Government was faced on the eve of Reza Shah's rise to power. The history of his movement is therefore so significant that it must briefly be related, beginning in that crucial year 1915. In that year Kuchik Khan met Ihsanu'llah and a number of other patriots in Tehran, and they outlined a programme of reform directed against the ruling class and foreign influence. Frightened, like the other nationalists, out of Tehran, Kuchik Khan began an agitation among the peasants of Gilan. By 1917 he and

Ihsanu'llah were leading a rebellion of the Jangalis against the Government and British influence. In this year they formed a revolutionary committee called Ittihad-i-Islam, Union of Islam, with a nationalistic programme. They engaged German and Turkish officers as instructors in the arts of war and a German, von Pachen, became Kuchik Khan's closest adviser. These Germans and Turks had been part of the Kirmanshah movement, by that time proved to have been abortive. Kuchik Khan's reliance on them marked a parting of ways between him and Ihsanu'llah, an Azerbaijani in origin, who was more radical and favoured closer relations with the Russian revolutionaries. However, 1918 saw a strengthening of the rebels' hold on Gilan, a rich province of considerable economic significance to the central government, many of whose leading men owned large and productive trading estates there. The movement's aims were published in its newspaper, *Jangal*. Its dominance of the region was signalled by the capture of Captain Noel, a British Intelligence Officer, and of Maclaren and Oakshott, the British Consul and Bank Manager in Rasht. Its finance was furnished by the extortion of money from the terrorized landowners. Plunder of the rich, Robin Hood style, to feed the poor became the subject of ballads and jangali folklore. Then the Dunster force arrived on the edge of Gilan and after skirmishes, in August 1918, the force's commanders signed an agreement with Kuchik Khan whereby they gained a passage to the Caspian coast. In return Kuchik Khan's authority in Gilan was recognised and he was even accorded the right to appoint the Governor provided that, besides protecting the Dunster Force's lines of communication and allowing it unmolested passage, he expelled his German and Turkish military advisers and released Captain Noel from captivity. No reference was made in these arrangements to Tehran, but the agreement had the effect of weakening the Ittihad-i-Islam, as any form of accommodation with the British was bound to do. So weakened was the movement that in the summer of 1919, after being defeated by the Iranian Cossacks, Kuchik Khan was forced to flee for his life into the jungles of his native province.

His next move was to find new allies. He and Ihsanu'llah found them in the Russian revolutionaries. In the autumn of 1919 Kuchik Khan visited Lankaran in Russian Azerbaijan and reached an understanding with Soviet agents. Thus with strong Soviet sponsorship the movement could be revived during the winter of 1919–1920. Kuchik Khan was able to build up an estimated force of 6,000 men. Now, in addition to harassing the British, he declared war on the Persian Government; and yet at this juncture Kuchik Khan was far from being confident. His uncertainty chiefly lay in his distrust of the

Bolsheviks. He was deeply religious and a thorough-going Iranian nationalist. He had no desire to embark on far-reaching exploits with Bolshevik help or incitement.

Very different was the case of Ihsanu'llah who, as a trained Bolshevik agent, believed that a revolutionary force could only maintain itself in action; for these were the days of militant communism, of Trotsky's perpetual revolution. They were, moreover, times when Ihsanu'llah Khan could count on Russian support, for Lenin's doctrine, that the best way of defeating western capitalism was by striking at its Achilles' heel in its imperial possessions and spheres of influence and exploitation, was still being applied. Any form of attack on British influence in Iran and on Britain's Iranian puppets was considered worth noticing if not actively encouraging. Thanks to Ihsanu'llah, the Jangalis were able to extend their power all over Gilan and were preparing to attack Mazandaran, the neighbouring province, upon which Tehran relied for most of its supplies. The two leaders had the best of two propaganda worlds: the nationalist Persian press looked with favour upon Kuchik Khan: the Bolshevik propaganda built up Ihsanu'llah.

The Bolsheviks could not resist the temptation offered by this successful rebellion. The British were depleting their forces and talking of a speedy withdrawal. There were, however, still Russian officers, unsympathetic to the Bolshevik revolution, in control of the Persian Cossacks, the most formidable force Iran possessed, and the White Russian General Denikin had escaped with his ships to the port of Enzeli. This served as the excuse for the invasion. The British at Enzeli were told that it was mounted simply to recapture Denikin's ships. General Champain took the Bolsheviks at their word, came to an agreement with them and withdrew; he lacked the means, he decided, of holding Enzeli. But after the landing on 18th May 1920 of these Bolshevik forces, Kuchik Khan was dubious. He spent the day in prayer, with Ihsanu'llah advising him to forget the Quran and Islam if he desired friendship with Lenin. At length, after much deliberation, Kuchik Khan acknowledged the Russian alliance. A few days later the Soviet Republic of Gilan was declared. Kuchik Khan's telegram to Lenin announcing this contained the cautious words, 'Bearing in mind the establishment of brotherly union and full unanimity between us, we expect from the free Russian nation the assistance that may prove indispensable for the stabilisation of the Persian S.S.R.'[1]

[1] Cited from Nasrollah Saifpour Fatemi, op. cit., p. 221, where it is quoted from the *Iran* newspaper for 25th June 1920. Cf. Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran: 1918–1948*, Ithaca, N.Y., p. 57.

At this stage of the proceedings the Russians did not see fit to disown the invasion of Iran and blame it on the Azerbaijan Republic; Radek, in *Izvestia* for 10th June 1920, quoted the plentiful evidence in the British press for British inability to contain or crush the revolution in Persia. But he added that, provided the British made peace with Soviet Russia, Russia would be willing to act as intermediary between Britain and the Persian revolutionaries, for the protection of Britain's 'vast interests' in Iran. From this it may be conceived that among the motives behind the invasion of Gilan was the notion that it would force Great Britain to be more amenable in negotiations with Soviet Russia. At the same time, the false assumption was made that Iran was ripe for a communist rising.

Lloyd George did in fact urge the necessity for abolishing British commitments in the Caucasus. Curzon successfully opposed the idea of total withdrawal but acquiesced in the evacuation of Batum in June, which would not have any direct bearing on the situation in Persia. Mr. Lloyd George continued conversations with Krassin about a trade agreement between Russia and Britain, and would probably have done this whether a place in north Iran had been invaded by Bolshevik forces or not; Lloyd George was not strong in geography but he could be a very realistic statesman.

Meanwhile the situation in Gilan was more like a nightmare than the dream of either an Iranian nationalist or a Russian Communist. The new Soviet Republic was being controlled by men like Ahramkin and Abrahamoff, who had been joined by two Soviet-trained Iranians, Pishavari and Haidar Khan of Azerbaijan. The Rasht Committee was subject to Baku and Moscow: Kuchik Khan and his friends were little more than figureheads. Officers, merchants, landowners and peasant proprietors, intellectuals and school-teachers, to the number of between eight hundred and a thousand, had been summarily sentenced to death and the executions of many of them carried out. Confiscated lands were being redistributed to anyone who evinced sympathy for the hastily fabricated and far from harmonious regime. Eventually Kuchik Khan could bear it no longer. Revulsion from the excesses of the Republican Government made revolt a possibility and he broke with Ihsanu'llah and Pishavari. As a nationalist he had every reason to be alarmed. Forces, responsible not to Iran but to the Third International, were threatening to seize and hold the whole length of the Caspian littoral, including the province of Mazandaran. This meant that they were gaining positions from which to threaten Tehran on the other side of the Alburz. The time had come when Kuchik Khan had to sever his connections with men from over the Caspian Sea, and look towards readjusting

his relations with Tehran, the capital of his own country, the land it had been his plan to see ruled by a representative Parliament, not by a Leninism which was preaching hatred of parliaments.

On 12th August 1920, after suffering a defeat at the hands of Kuchik Khan's men, the Bolsheviks looted and burned part of the provincial capital of Rasht and withdrew to the port of Enzeli, where they waited in camp to be used if necessary as a pressure force, in accordance with well-established Russian practice. But in the meantime there had been a shift in policy. When Vusuq resigned, he was succeeded by Mushiru'd-Daulah as Prime Minister and Mushiru'd-Daulah's great wealth was largely derived from property in Mazandaran. He decided to strengthen ties with Moscow and the Moscow Government was also in a conciliatory mood, perturbed by an adverse Persian press which was again putting the Russian and British Governments on the same footing. Leon Karakhan, the Iranian Government was informed, was ready to negotiate and Mushaviru'l-Mamalik, Iranian Ambassador at Constantinople, was directed to Moscow to meet the Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs. The Moscow Government conveniently disowned the Gilan Republic and disclaimed direct responsibility for the invasion of Persia. However, as the British delayed withdrawal of their troops until May 1921, a pretext was provided, as noted by the Iranian authorities, for the Bolsheviks to remain on the Caspian seaboard. Indeed in June 1921 Kuchik Khan effected some reconciliation with his old Bolshevik friends and began a march on Tehran, while fresh Soviet contingents were landed at Enzeli. But this episode forms part of another story and is only mentioned here as the finale of Kuchik Khan's history. A combined force of Jangalis and Russians was defeated by a division of the Iranian Cossacks, and, after Soviet troops eventually left on 8th September 1921, an Iranian force was able to retake Gilan. Kuchik Khan fled for the last time to the woods and mountains of his native province and died of exposure, his head being later brought to Tehran. Reza Khan had triumphed over one of his potential rivals.

No doubt Reza Khan was aware that there were many who admired the Gilani leader, including officials of the Central Government whom Kuchik Khan had not mistreated too severely during his days of power in his province, but whom instead he had pleaded with for support in programmes of reform. Particularly interesting is the record of his dealings with 'Isa Khan, the Government's Director of Education, whom Kuchik Khan entreated to help him restore education in the Gilani Schools after the ideological, moral and disciplinary chaos that had been instituted by the Sovietizers. Dr. 'Isa

Sadiq narrates this in his autobiography and testifies to the sincerity of Kuchik Khan in efforts to achieve a regeneration of his country. Yet he was a rebel; he had consorted, however reluctantly, with the Bolsheviks and so no loyal Iranian could do his bidding. In this was a lesson for Colonel Reza Khan of the Cossack Division: to appear at any time beholden to any foreign influence was fatal to success; and to move out of the capital to operate against the Government was equally fatal. The way to success was to command a movement from within and to approach with all speed the seat of government, there to join and thenceforward gradually prevail over the governing powers. This is what Reza Khan proceeded to do.

The chance came to begin applying this lesson in February 1921. Reza Khan was familiar with the Gilan movement, and also with the separatist movement in Azerbaijan, because he had been with his Cossack unit fighting these rebels. Reza Khan, although by western social criteria and by those of an aristocratic minority in Iran, of obscure origins, had risen to a senior position in the Cossack Division. He was physically large and strong, the kind of Iranian to be noticed by the foreign officers who ran the Division. In addition to his physical strength, his tact and shrewdness had been noticeable some years before when, after the Russian revolution, the officers of the Division had decided to remove their Commander, Colonel Clerge. The plot had been organised by the Russian officers under Colonel Storroselski, but Reza Khan had been charged with the delicate task of winning over the Persian officers, and had shown his resoluteness when at the crisis he had marched the troops from their billets to invest Colonel Clerge's headquarters. It may therefore be supposed that this Mazandarani Iranian soldier was by no means unmindful of the larger issues at stake when engaged against the northern rebels in 1920 and 1921; while he had already been introduced on a small scale to the technique of making a *coup d'état*. He may be pictured during the months preceding the *coup d'état* of 1921 as watchful and judiciously holding his council. Subsequent events proved his extraordinary capacity for patience and the manipulation of personalities.

The Azerbaijan separatist movement was short-lived but thoroughly illustrative of the persistence of the Constitutionalist ideals and of how tragically in advance of the majority of the people were their intellectual exponents. A situation in leadership similar to that in Gilan existed in Tabriz, where the Russophile role was played by Pishevari and the Iranian nationalists' by Khiabani. But Khiabani repudiated the Bolsheviks with much more determination than did Kuchik Khan, whom he condemned for his pact with the foreign communists. Khiabani refused to accept Pishevari's assertion that

Soviet Russia had adopted the 'saviour position' in helping the Iranian communist programme, outlined for Gilan and Azerbaijan at the Congress held in Enzeli in May 1920. Pishevari's day in Azerbaijan did not come until after the Second World War; in 1920 the movement was Khiabani's and he defied Russian agents and unswervingly allied himself with the Persian nationalists.

Khiabani had been a Majlis deputy but in 1911 had migrated to the Caucasus and established contact with the Reds. During the war he had worked against foreigners in Tabriz and had been arrested by the Turks in 1916. Later he founded the National Democratic Party of Azerbaijan and took over Tabriz with the help of a German Consul who had been disowned by his own Legation and who committed suicide after Khiabani's death. Khiabani was both eloquent and learned. Besides oratory, he expressed his views in his own remarkable newspaper, which was called *Tajaddud*, 'Renewal'. The spur to his desperate attempt to organise a nationalist movement was Vusuqu'd-Daulah's negotiations with the British. His platform was that no government could be trusted to conclude agreements with foreign powers without the full cognizance of a parliament and parliamentary ratification. His suspicion of a central government susceptible to foreign influences and his assessment of the weakness of the administration led him to advocate a large measure of provincial autonomy. Articles 90 to 93 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law of 8th October 1907 provided for the setting up of Provincial and District Councils with wide, although vague, powers. Hence advocates of provincial autonomy can take their stand on the Constitution, and, as will be seen, separatist movements after the Second World War, when defeated, invoked these clauses in their defence. Khiabani believed that local government could be more effectively democratic and controlled by the people than central government. He believed that the people needed their own local power to protect them against tyranny from a strong central government; he also doubtless well understood how a gap that had been left in the country's political life, by the collapse of older forms of group protection of the people's rights.

When Mushiru'd-Daulah took over from Vusuq, he not only began to circumvent the Gilan communist movement by strengthening the Government's relations with Moscow, but also reacted vigorously to Khiabani's activities in Tabriz. Khiabani had declared Azerbaijan separate under the name Azadistan, which means Land of Freedom. He rejected both Turkish and Russian offers of help. He attempted to institute his own brand of the socialism of responsible individuals, to which all were to contribute freely as responsible

members of the community. Mushiru'd-Daulah sent Mukhbiru's-Saltanah, a member of the famous Hedayat family, to Tabriz as Governor, to begin energetic measures of suppression. Khiabani was killed on 14th September 1920 and his movement was at an end. In the Majlis which had finally been convened, Mushiru'd-Daulah explained, on 22nd October, that, while he wished to see the Constitution effective, in so large a country as Iran, with its numerous fissiparous tendencies, he must insist upon the Central Government retaining complete control.

Thus on the eve of Ziau'd-Din Tabataba'i and Reza Khan's *coup d'état* early in 1921, those nationalist democratic forces which had been dispersed from Tehran during Nasiru'l-Mulk's regency and again in November 1915 were active in a variety of ways and a variety of places, from northern Iran at least as far as Berlin. For in Berlin the Third International, established in 1919, had sired, through the League for the Liberation of Islam, an Eastern Central Committee, at one of whose meetings Iranian nationalists like Taqizadeh were present in December 1919. The Committee's purpose was to supervise revolutionary organisations in Iran, Transcaucasia, Anatolia and India. Communist activities in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Egypt were to be dealt with by a European Central Committee. German communists were giving hospitality to Muslims, very few of whom were in reality communist. Rather, they were of the democratic, liberal, nationalistic colouring with which we have become familiar in the pages of this history. They were playing the dangerous game of trying to use communist influence and propaganda to overthrow unpopular governments and destroy British economic and political power in the Middle East. As *The Times* of 3rd February 1920 suggested, it was probable that to some extent the German hosts to these agitators were acting in continuation of the former German policy of expansion of influence in the East. Nevertheless, there was much idealism in the air, and in the midst of it all some Iranian intellectuals were bidding fair once again to miss a major throw for power in their own country.

In spite of England's divided councils on the subject of Persia in 1920, there was apparently agreement that the question of the Soviet landing in Gilan should not reach a definite decision in the Council of the League of Nations, which by then had been established. On 19th May, Prince Firuz submitted to the Secretary General of the League a detailed report from his government about the Bolshevik invasion of the preceding day. At a private meeting of the League Council on 14th June, presided over by Lord Curzon, the British representative, the French delegate, Fleurian, declared that

the League of Nations was not competent to deal with Iran's present emergency because the Anglo-Persian Agreement had not been placed before it. At the subsequent public meeting in St. James's Palace a day or two later, a resolution was passed which in its evasiveness might have served as a warning to Iran of what to expect from such a body. The resolution said that before advising on how the obligations of the League's Covenant should in this instance be fulfilled it was thought better to await the outcome of Soviet promises. Tcicherin had, it is true, given some grounds for hope of withdrawal of the Soviet's invading force when he replied to the Persian protest. The condition, however, had been acceptance of Matoff as officially accredited Soviet envoy to Tehran, and Persian recognition of the new Russian regime. The Iranians said that Matoff could come as Bravin had done, with no official standing; and that they would not recognise the Soviet government until other powers did so. This reply angered Moscow and resulted, on 9th June, in the spreading of the Bolshevik force from the port of Enzeli to the provincial capital of Gilan, Rasht, where the government offices were taken over and the city seized.

It is obvious that nobody except Iran expected the League to take any positive action, but its failure to do so served, first, to help to finish Vusuqu'd-Daulah, and, second, to increase bitterness towards Great Britain. That dangerous sense of despondency was also increased, to which Reza Khan's proclamation might have referred after his and Sayyid Zia's *coup d'état* of the succeeding February, where it mentioned the 'chain' or 'coil' of 'the magic spell' which treacherous leaders had cast over the nation; a miasma of gloom and hopelessness was in the Iranian air. It communicated itself to the British advisers who were already in Tehran, but no doubt Lord Curzon congratulated himself that the speech of Prince Firuz to the League Council had been managed in such a way that the situation in Iran had not been drastically changed, nor fallen into other hands than the British. It remained fluid and exploitable. At the same time Mr. Lloyd George had answered a question in the House of Commons about the impending meeting of the League Council and had implied that the Persian problem was not of the first significance. His sangfroid may be ascribed to the construction that could have been put on the Russian invasion of Gilan, as a demonstration to blackmail England into being more amenable in negotiating a trade agreement and the exchange of prisoners with the new Soviet regime.

The ambivalence of British policy and the increasing weakness at home of Curzon's Middle Eastern thesis were reflected by hesitancy on the Foreign Office's part – Sir Percy Cox was now replaced at

Tehran by Mr. Norman – and by acceleration of withdrawal plans by the War Office. Members of the British Financial Mission were dismayed by what they took to be the Foreign Office's lack of concern over events in Persia. At the same time, they were equally aghast at the conduct of the British Bank. One day payments were restricted and on another restrictions relaxed. At one stage the Bank refused the sale of European credits to Persians. These panic reactions were accompanied by discussion about the evacuation of British subjects and heightened rumours of the danger from Gilan. No doubt the Bank officials were justly apprehensive. Iranian observers, however, describe how, at a moment when the British Imperial Bank of Persia might have provided a steadying influence, its conduct only served greatly to promote the general anxiety, so that an ulterior motive was ascribed to it.

This behaviour increased suspicion of the British and made patriots more than ever determined to establish a National Bank as soon as the opportunity presented itself. One Bank decision had the effect of rapidly enhancing the influence of a politician who was shortly destined to play a decisive role in his country's affairs. This was Sayyid Ziau'd-Din Tabataba'i. He had already constituted himself an intermediary between Iranian notables and the British Legation and when the Bank insisted that government cheques should be seen by the Legation before they were negotiated, Sayyid Zia slipped into the position of being the man through whom this awkward formality could most easily be accomplished. The function had nothing specially spectacular in it but in Iran anyone who can facilitate a transaction, and especially anyone to whom reference has to be made in order to obtain money, soon acquires disproportionate prestige and influence. He becomes the person most relied upon. He automatically becomes the sharer of many secrets and it is he whom both parties to any piece of business begin to welcome and treat with effusive civility. For he enjoys the maximum degree of access to several sources of power and himself holds the key to a variety of privileges. The Bank's restrictions lent a fortuitous circumstance to the life of Sayyid Ziau'd-Din from which he was just the man to profit: he temporarily became a key figure, to whom the Shah and the nobles had to turn to ensure that their cheques were cashed.

Sayyid Ziau'd-Din Tabataba'i was a nationalist intellectual whose head was full of political and social ideas not all of which he had very thoroughly assimilated. But he also had a practical side to his character and was ambitious. Moreover, his sincerity cannot be doubted, nor the accuracy of his political judgement in so far as Iran's relations with foreigners were concerned. He knew that help

from abroad was still necessary. He knew equally well that no government which so much as looked like being a puppet of the British, or of any other power, could achieve success. His aims were therefore to achieve power without British support but also without alienating the British, whose presence would be necessary for the time being and whose sympathy would be preferable, in his view, to anyone else's. Once in power, rather as Khiabani had done, he thought in terms of building the national economy by an enlightened socialistic development of the country's natural resources and avoidance of further servitude to foreign loans; and of strengthening the administration by encouraging a wider measure of provincial autonomy and local government.

The Sayyid was an adroit man in whom poverty had developed the charming manners of one who did not possess great physical address – he was small and delicately formed – but who had to win the approbation of patrons in his early youth by pleasant conduct and witty conversation. He was originally from Yazd. He spent many of his formative years in Shiraz. In both cities the foreign element was predominantly British. His patrons were men who admired the British. It is not therefore strange that the Sayyid should in his heart of hearts be a lover of the British. He was, and remains, one of a number of patriotic Iranians who believe that the British are to be preferred to either the Russians or the Americans.

During the War, when, as we have seen, many of Iran's potential leaders were abroad or scattered about the country following will-o'-the-wisps of political opportunity and power, the Sayyid stayed at home. He started a newspaper called *Ra'd*, which means 'Thunder'. But he kept his newspaper sufficiently well trimmed to the prevailing breezes for it to become recognised as a reputable journal, ranking close to the official government gazette and only occasionally giving vent to well-informed criticism of government policy and British ineptitude. Of the latter, the Sayyid had had enough experience to speak with authority.

Late in 1919 he was sent as his country's representative to Baku to negotiate a political and commercial treaty. This was at a time when the South Caucasian states still intended resisting subjugation to Bolshevism and wanted closer ties with Iran. The mission gave the Sayyid a semi-official standing in government circles which he was careful to cultivate. Meanwhile his affiliations with the British were all that he could desire. The British liked his sincerity and were charmed by his blend of an Iranian and European outlook. He was, and indeed still is, the perfect companion for the foreign student of Persia and its culture. He helps over the finer points of the Persian

language. He is full of interesting anecdotes and can speak expertly of religion, the Iranian mentality, the economic possibilities of his country, and its plants and flowers. It is not surprising to read that just before his *coup d'état* on 21st February 1921, he spent an evening with British friends reciting and explaining modern Persian poetry to them.

The Sayyid's political activities before the final move in February 1921 had not enabled him to embrace the sterner nationalists but had been limited to the circles of the Moderates. It is perhaps unfortunate that he had been unable to capture the Nationalists and Democrats more successfully. But his association with Prince Firuz and the British prevented this. His chief base had been the association known as the "Steel" Committee, the Anjuman-i-Pulad, in the Tehran branch of the original "Iron" Committee that had been founded under British auspices in Isfahan. The Committee, while failing to attract extremer nationalist elements, had obtained the allegiance of certain senior Persian officers of the Cossack Division and the Gendarmerie; the Sayyid had deliberately started cultivating the friendship of officers during his mission to Baku. When Mushiru'd-Daulah's government rashly dismissed General Westdahl, the Swedish Chief of Police, in the summer of 1920, it was the Steel Committee which took him under its wing, and thus retained his services against the time when his prestige and decision would be useful adjuncts in maintaining order in the capital.

Persian Cossack officers in the Committee's confidence entertained serious misgivings over the continued presence of their Russian superiors. These were considered unreliable and the Cossack Divison vital, as Iran's only substantial and indigenous military arm. The Committee's misgivings were political; those of the Persian officers, as much as anything else, personal. They disliked the retention of executive power by their foreign seniors. Reverses in Gilan against the Bolsheviks gave those who wanted to see the Russian officers go their opportunity. The blame was attached to the Commander, Storroselski. The British appear to have encouraged the dismissal of the Russians and eventually Colonel Storroselski and his compatriots left under British auspices for Baghdad; not, it would appear, dissatisfied with the bargain they had struck.

The Cossack Division was now left in the hands of its Persian Officers, with whom a few British officers joined in ill-defined capacities to ensure some kind of continued liaison. General Ironside, however, who had replaced Champain in command of the British units based on Qazvin, acted promptly on the dismissal of the Russian Commander to prevent the men of the Cossack Division drifting

towards the capital. With the exception of a small detachment already in Tehran, they were kept concentrated in the neighbourhood of Qazvin, whence their departure made the subsequent *coup d'état* possible. Colonel Dickson, the British officer who had arrived to take charge of the British Military Mission intended to operate under the 1919 Agreement, left Iran after becoming convinced that the Agreement would never be ratified. His replacement, Colonel Smythe, enjoyed cordial relations with Sayyid Zia and it is to be presumed that the Sayyid was at pains to use his charm on this officer in such a way as to lull any suspicions he might have had that the Iranian politician contemplated decisive action. It seems clear that the Sayyid did not intend risking his venture by permitting British intervention.

Mushiru'd-Daulah's government fell and he was succeeded by Sardar-i-Sipah Fathu'llah Gilani, who continued the policy of promising the British that there was still a possibility of the Agreement being ratified. Early in the winter of 1920 the idea was canvassed of a Cabinet reshuffle to result in the inclusion of some of the younger reformists of the Steel Committee group, Sayyid Zia among them. Had this come to anything the *coup d'état* of the Sayyid and Colonel Reza Khan might never have taken place. However, the Sayyid said that there could be no participation in the Government unless it had command of an effective fighting force, at least fifteen thousand strong. For this money was needed and eyes were turned towards the British, whose Agreement was still hanging fire, and who might therefore have been expected to be forthcoming with a loan. But no, not this time, and so the reformist group scouted the suggestion that they should participate in the government.

The episode served further to clarify the situation because, besides showing their unwillingness to make any advance in addition to the regular monthly payments that were being rendered the Iranian Government, the British also stated their intention of completing the withdrawal of their troops as soon as the coming of spring cleared the passes. Thus by January 1921 the Sayyid and his associates knew that action could not long be delayed. So long as some British force remained, a restraining influence, a scapegoat and a weapon with which to overawe the capital existed, and it was under the shadow of this that the Sayyid intended to act. It was important to act before the last British soldier departed because, when the British had gone, there was no knowing whether the ensuing situation could be controlled at all. The British did not have to know what the Sayyid was planning; but their presence was necessary for his plans to be effected.

The young Shah, Sultan Ahmad, was terrified by events in Gilan, while he was disgusted with his leading subjects and frightened of all the rest. His fears were a weakness resulting from recollections of what had happened to his father, with whom he shared his morbid dread of the press and the politicians. He was now showing signs of the utmost anxiety and at the same time beginning a feverish collection of money, as if avariciously to ensure wealth and ease in the exile that was not unlikely to be his ultimate fate. He declared that, with the Bolsheviks threatening the capital, he would leave the country altogether if he could not make his seat Shiraz, a safe distance away from the communist forces rumoured to be over against the capital, on the other side of the Alburz Mountains. These royal apprehensions and the weakness of character they displayed were not lost on those who were weighing future possibilities, and may have been played upon by those whose interests such weakness might serve; but the Shah was persuaded to stay in Tehran.

For a short time in February Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik was prevailed upon once again to be Prime Minister. Before giving up he did two things which tended to break the spell that had been hanging over Iranian governments since August 1919. He told the British that, unlike his predecessors, Vusuq and Mushiru'd-Daulah and Sardar-i-Sipah Fathu'llah Gilani, he could not promise Majlis ratification of the Agreement; and he instructed his foreign missions to begin looking for foreign advisers in countries other than Great Britain. By 20th February, however, Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik had found that he could achieve nothing and Fathu'llah Khan was again in office. On the night of 20th-21st February there was some shooting in the streets of Tehran, and then a silence which set the minds of its disturbed citizens again at rest until the day broke. When light appeared they read proclamations on the walls telling them that the capital had been taken over. These notices were signed by Reza Khan and enjoined obedience and the preservation of order. But already a large number of princes, nobles, liberals and others who might have proved troublesome had been taken to the Cossack Barracks under arrest, while the aid of Westdahl had assured no resistance from the city's police during the march in, and the Gendarmerie had also been kept immobilised.

Reza Khan had gradually brought his Cossacks from Qazvin. The rumour of this movement had caused anxiety in the capital, but the Prime Minister had adopted a casual air and it was noticed that, in spite of great perturbation in the royal palace, the Shah too had preserved a perfectly calm appearance. The Prime Minister sent his aide, Mirza Husain Khan Adibu's-Saltanah, out to Shahabad to

meet the Cossack force, ostensibly to discover what their Commander intended to do. He had in his party two representatives of the British Legation. First of all they met Reza Khan. Sayyid Zia had intended to keep himself concealed until the last possible moment. He was now with the force but seems to have wanted to remain hidden until sure of the capture of the capital, when he could reveal himself as the leader of the plot and form a government. He says that he watched Reza Khan meet Adibu's-Saltanah and his companions in a room, the Sayyid standing by a window outside. However, when he noticed that Reza Khan showed signs of hesitation on confronting this small party of fur-coated gentlemen, he decided that he must go in and take charge of the situation. To the surprise of the party the small Sayyid suddenly entered, dressed for the first time in a non-clerical garb, with the Persian-lamb cap he affects to this day. He explained to them what was happening and apologised for the necessity of retaining them as his guests until the *coup d'état* had been successfully completed. They returned to Tehran with him and Adibu's-Saltanah was shortly afterwards set at liberty.

It is unlikely that anybody in Tehran knew exactly what was happening, although the Shah, the Prime Minister and the British Legation may well have been aware that some move was afoot; the British Minister was giving a private dinner party that evening and, on hearing of the Cossacks' approach, expressed to his English guests the greatest fear that his life might be in danger. Prince Firuz may have known or guessed at more than most and may have said something to reassure the Shah, who could have evinced an abdication of responsibility, a gesture of hopelessness and nonchalance based on the assumption that whatever occurred, the British would finally provide some kind of immunity. The Hon. J. M. Balfour wrote an account of his Persian experiences while a member of the British financial advisory body which in February 1921 was still kicking its heels in Tehran. He called it *Recent Happenings in Persia* and it was published in 1922. He treated everyone concerned with such ruthlessness that the book became the subject of libel actions and had to be withdrawn for certain passages to be deleted. He is not therefore likely to have spared the British Legation – he certainly did not spare the British Government or Lord Curzon in his strictures of their policy – and when he says of the *coup d'état* that, 'One thing, I believe, may be affirmed with absolute certainty – namely, that the movement was not engineered either by or with the knowledge of the British Legation' (p. 218), there seems every reason to accept his statement as true. Had we no such statement to go on, there is also the obvious political necessity already alluded to, of Sayyid Zia and

Reza Khan's not risking British intervention in their plot; and yet it is hardly necessary to say that rumour assumed British participation in the plot and British instigation of it. It was even thought by some that Prince Firuz and Curzon had thought of it as one of several possible alternative courses of action in the event of the Agreement not being ratified. The plan for the *coup d'état* would thus have been the *saugat*, a gift presented on returning from a journey, which the Prince brought back with him when he left London!

A French observer, who, like J. M. Balfour, was in Tehran at the time, took the presence of representatives of the British Legation in Adibu's-Saltanah's party as proof of British complicity. In his book, *Les Anglais en Perse*, which was also published in 1922, this author, Emile Lesueur, states that one of the British officials distributed five tumans to each of the soldiers who were being led to Tehran. The expressed purpose of this dole was 'to withdraw these undesirables from the capital'. The Frenchman adds, darkly, 'was this indeed the purpose of his intervention?' The fact is that one of the excuses which had been given out to account for the movement of the Cossacks from Qazvin was their clamour for pay and to be reunited with their families after a long time on active service. Although the British had been helping to finance the force at Qazvin, there is no way of ascertaining how much of this help had actually reached the men, while there is plenty of evidence to show that their clamour for pay, equipment and the sight of their families was amply justified and indeed skilfully used by Reza Khan to make them march to Tehran and to cover the real purpose of their advance. Therefore the arrangement that the money should be distributed in the name of the Shah – but by the British authorities who happened to have it available – can be explained. Acceptance of rumours of British instigation of the plot indicates a gullibility on the part of foreign observers who will accept whatever Tehran gossip says, and leads to an underestimation of the Iranian's capacity for positive autonomous action. It is to be regretted that, when it suited their purpose in the Second World War, British Information Services themselves issued statements to the effect that it was the British who had made possible Reza Shah's rise to power. For the honour of Iran it is preferable to believe that he and Sayyid Zia acted independently in carrying out the *coup d'état*.

The Sayyid's government lasted only three months. As has been mentioned, its first act was the imprisonment of all the leading members of the élite who were in Tehran. Particular attention was paid, not so much to their potentialities as political intriguers, but to their

wealth. The expenses of the *coup d'état* and of the government it inaugurated had to be found. Dependence on the British Legation, and 'chits' from it to the British Bank, for every tuman of cash, were matters which had seared themselves into Sayyid Ziau'd-Din's soul. The squeeze began at once on those al-Mulks, ad-Daulahs, as-Saltanahs and as-Sultans whom he now had, not without some personal glee, under lock and key. Traditionally in Iran the rich only disgorge their best handle to power when under the severest duress.

While the aristocracy was being precipitately shown the inside of the Cossack Division's Guardroom, and the Sayyid was showing no sign of awareness of the political resilience of his prisoners, the following remarkable proclamation had been printed and was being plastered up in the streets of the city:

> 'Compatriots, the sacred duties of sacrifice for our King and Country in the bloody, death-laden fields made by a larger and better equipped enemy force to invade Iran and threaten its capital – these sacred duties were heartily and courageously accepted by the brave men of the Cossack Force. For this was the only force properly organised in Iran to be capable of undertaking the defence of the country and it was the men of this force who, lacking clothes, lacking boots, lacking food, lacking adequate arms, made their chests and faces shields against the shot-scattering canon, and stood testimony to the glory and honour of Iran, driving the invader from the gates of Qazvin to the shores of the sea.
>
> 'Had the sacrifices and service, rendered without regard to life, of the Cossack Army not attained the desired result and had we been unable to save the sacred soil of our land and the violated dignity of Gilani brothers from the hand of the foe, it would have been through no fault of ours. No, had our efforts been barren it would have been due to the treachery of the officers and of those people who entrusted the direction of our business to them. Yet we may boast with pride that the effusion of Cossack blood was able to save our country's capital from enemy capture. Had the foreign traitors been able to nullify the sacrifices of Iran's sons it would have been due to this, that our own traitors among us had become playthings in their hands and panderers to their, and others', whims. At the time of our retreat from the Gilan marshes under fire from the enemy's guns, we felt that the source and origin of all Iran's misfortunes was the vileness of that army of our own traitors. At the time when we were shedding our blood before the invading host, by the honour of that same pure and

holy blood did we swear that on the first available opportunity we would shed our blood to uproot these selfish, pampered traitors and release the people of Iran from the coils of the magic spell cast over them by a handful of thieves.

'God's will and the royal desire found that this opportunity was ready for us and so it is that we are here in Tehran. We have not seized Tehran, for it would be impossible for us to raise our arms in the place honoured by the presence of our blessed Prince and Sovereign. We have only come to Tehran, and we have done this to cleanse and purify our capital to be fit to become the seat of a true guardianship of the realm and the centre of government; government that shall devote itself only to Iran; government that shall be not simply the spectator of the nation's misfortunes and humiliation; government that shall consider among the first blessings of the country the glorification and expansion of the army; that shall know the army's strength and well-being to be the country's sole means of salvation. Government that shall not make the treasury of Muslims the means of satisfying the lusts of idle, pampered parasites without honour. Government that shall not make the splendid abode of Muslim people the centre of infamy and the base for tyranny and tight-fisted extortion. Government under whose jurisdiction thousands of the country's children shall not die of hunger and misery. Government that will permit no difference to appear between the protection of the honour and chastity of a Gilani, Tabrizi, or Kirmani and the protection of its own sisters and mothers. Government that will not add to the nation's wretchedness for the sake of embellishing and glorifying a limited few. Government that shall never be the tool of foreign politicians.

'We are soldiers and ready to make the supreme sacrifice. We are prepared to shed our blood to realise these aspirations. Our only desire is the strength and glory of the Army for the safe-keeping of our sacred King and Country. The moment such a government has been formed and the means of ensuring the nation's honour, freedom, repose, and progress have become manifest and the nation is no longer treated as a flock of muted sheep, that is the moment when we shall be able to look to the future with confidence. As we have shown, we shall fulfil the duty of defending the country – with all our military brethren in the Gendarmerie and Police Battalions who have also with sad hearts shared in the sacrifices of the Cossack Division and possess the utmost sincerity of purpose – and we shall not permit those hostile to the army's happy development to sow division among us. We

are all loyal to the Shah, ready to lay down our lives: all sons of Iran, servants of the realm. Long live the Shah of Iran. Long may the Iranian Nation endure. Long may the Army and the Brave Cossacks of Iran be strong and glorious. Head of the Imperial Royal Cossack Division and Commander-in-Chief, Reza.'

The document's style betrays signs of Sayyid Ziau'd-Din's hand, as well as hasty composition and some conflict of views about what it should proclaim. The emphasis on the renown of the Cossack Division is too obvious to need comment: the reference to the Gendarmerie and Police too clearly an insertion for it to be doubted that here was a hand, other than the signatory's, tinkering with the draft.

The Sayyid had no desire to be beholden only to Reza Khan and the Cossacks and, not if he could help it, was the Gendarmerie to be offended or, worse, disbanded. He had another military partner in view, in some ways more acceptable than Reza Khan. This was Muhammad Taqi Khan, who was a Gendarmerie Officer and who was at this time in command in Khurasan. However, although a long way off, he showed his loyalty to the Sayyid's cause by quickly arresting the Governor, Qavamu's-Saltanah, Vusuqu'd-Daulah's brother, and having him dispatched to Tehran to be imprisoned with the other great men. But this incarceration was to promote antipathy of a very dangerous kind towards the Sayyid. It also provided a rival, in the Sayyid's own camp, with an immediate opportunity for intrigue with the Sayyid's enemies. Nevertheless, for the moment the Sayyid could feel fairly secure. The only serious opposition reported from those parts of the country that could be considered under Tehran's control was from Shiraz. There the Governor of the province of Fars, Musaddiqu's-Saltanah, put up some resistance but soon fled to the mountains, so that the southern province was again tranquil. The Sayyid was free to begin the task of reform and of government.

Chapter 15

Reza Shah's Inheritance

THE *coup d'état* began a new era of Iran's history. The spell of inaction and appalled suspense was broken. It was not to be the Sayyid who reaped the harvest of his political whirlwind, but the military man without whom the initial change could not have been made; but before the Sayyid is removed from the board, it is convenient to pause a moment and survey what was to be Reza Shah's estate in material terms. His political activities can then be seen against the background of the resources with which he had to build once he had gained supremacy. In actual land area his inheritance was, as we have seen, neither small nor compact. He was to become sovereign of a country as large as France, Germany and England put together – a country which if bisected from northwest to southeast would produce a line fourteen hundred miles long. Yet in 1921 this area was traversed by no railway. Its roads were still hardly more than camel tracks which followed the contours on higher ground and meandered to avoid ruined watercourses, treacherous salt-pans and Golgothas of completely arid wilderness in the plains. A few cars and lorries had, however, arrived. Also, as roads had been laid during the War for use by foreign armies, and before the War by the Russian traction companies in the north, there were about fifteen hundred miles of what, in the terms of those days, was described as motorable highway. In Tehran the Court, the Legations and a few notables possessed motor cars. Sayyid Ziau'd-Din still jokes about capturing two Rolls Royces during his march on Tehran. He entered the city in a style that at once befitted the assumption of power and was novel enough to accord with the opening of a new age.

The population had been depleted by war and famine, with the accompaniment of disease and the absence of medical services. There was a bill in 1921 before the Majlis for the institution of registration of births, deaths and marriages. From the beginning of the Constitutional Period in 1906, the necessity for registration and a census had been realised as the prelude to administrative reform. Religious prejudice and the popular fear that such a measure meant the basis

for further taxation by that hostile force, the Government, had delayed such enactments. An optimistic estimation of the population in 1922 gives it as ten million, half of what it is today. In that year a census was taken in Tehran, whose population was recorded as 210,000; in 1963 it was of the order of a million and a half. Therefore when Reza Shah came to power the country was very underpopulated. While today overpopulation of the capital is a serious problem, the country is still too short of people for ambitious development to be practicable. The suggestion was made in the early nineteen-twenties that foreign immigrants should be introduced to expedite certain areas of development; and a similar proposal has been heard in the nineteen-fifties. Mustafa Fateh, in his book, *The Economic Position of Persia*, published in 1926, said: 'Some people who are prejudiced by racial and religious questions claim that this suggested immigration is not practicable, and that it would be bound to create social difficulties in Persia. . . . I believe that immigration, especially of the European races within certain limits, would prove very useful as a means of remedying the shortage of population. Such a plan would bring about the dissemination of knowledge, the propagation of modern methods of living, and the introduction of European civilisation into the life of the people – a thing which is more practical for present-day Persia than education.' Again in 1955 a small number who wished to promote rapid economic progress and commercial expansion talked of introducing colonies of Japanese and a precedent existed for ideas of this sort in Shah Abbas's importation, by force, of a colony of Armenian craftsmen and traders, whom he settled at Isfahan. But so far no such action has been taken by any modern government.

It must not be forgotten that the denser populations of the past belonged to ages when water resources were not necessarily greater but better conserved than in more recent times; the remains of terraces, dams, old canals and reservoirs show that in the remote past water was conserved on a wide scale. Only in the last few years have attempts been again set on foot to expand water storage facilities, and they have not yet had time fully to bear fruit. Among the later catastrophes that spelt the final doom of ancient systems of water conservancy must be cited the collapse of the Safavid regime with the barbarous Afghan invasion in 1721–22. The Mongols are often made accountable for evils caused by more modern events, but between Hulagu's invasion in the thirteenth century and the rise of the Safavids in the sixteenth, there had been time for a resuscitation which Hulagu and his successors themselves inaugurated. Chardin's estimate of the population in Safavid times as being about forty

millions was of doubtful accuracy. Nevertheless, the general security, use of resources and attractiveness of Shah Abbas's Iran to foreigners make it clear that it was then much more populous than when Malcolm, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, thought its inhabitants could not number more than six million.

Water, though a vital problem, is not the only one. The health, hope and general well-being of the people are as important, and these are influenced by political conditions, the possibility of efficient development of resources other than water, and the world situation. The rise of America and the diversion of European attention to the New World, to India and to the possibility of direct seaborne trade with the Far East and the Spice Islands, helped Iran's fall into a place of secondary significance – a decline set in motion in earlier times by the Mongol devastation of Central Asia in the thirteenth century, the disruption of Asian trade routes before the Mongols erupted and also the decline, dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D., of the Abbasid Caliphate centred on Baghdad. The full effects of the new orientation of world trade took some time to be felt in Iran, but in the eye of history it is plain that when the Safavid monarchs began to draw Iran into an area roughly coinciding with its present expanse, and to form of it a coherent whole not dissimilar to the modern concept of a national state, Iran had already ceased to be a caravanserai between East and West and the gatherer of tolls and ideas on a great artery of world commercial and cultural exchange. Throughout the modern period of Iran's history this unrecognised, perhaps deliberately never articulated, never specified or properly faced lapse in importance has been reflected positively in the nation's increasingly loud insistence on its own high estimation of itself, and negatively by an increasing tendency to despondency, irresponsibility and apathy. Ceasing to be a pivotal point in the movement of world trade, Iran has become more imbued with the belief that it is part of an Iran-centred world. Thus when Russia and Great Britain were using Iran as a pawn in a game to which it was only a fringe area, its people showed every inclination to believe that their destinies were Russia and Britain's primary concern. In 1920 for example it was impossible for them to realise that statesmen like Mr. Lloyd George considered Iran of very secondary importance indeed, one of many areas for possible exploitation in negotiation, nothing more, in a game chiefly directed to the readjustment of Europe and the Levant. Unfortunately the personal and already anachronistic preoccupation with 'the Persian Question', displayed by people like Lord Curzon, only served to strengthen Iranians' exaggerated notions of their significance; and obviously it was principally to the

utterances of statesmen who professed interest in them that they paid attention. Nonetheless, they chose to ignore the fact that even Curzon's anxiety over Iran was subordinate to his deeper anxiety over India. Or, if they did not, this again was taken as evidence of Iran's preponderant importance.

Sayyid Zia and Reza Khan were distinguished from many of their fellow-countrymen in making a more realistic appraisal of Iran's position. Sayyid Zia knew very well his country's poverty and third-rate standing, and that foreigners only courted it with other motives in view and would drop it as soon as their other ends were served. Reza Khan knew that salvation lay in developing the country from within. His aim was to shatter the obsession with foreign influence under the spell of which so many of his compatriots, not least their king, laboured, and to make the country stand on its own feet. When he had performed these tasks, then Iran would be able to deal with foreign powers on its own, not on their, terms. The idea was repugnant to him, that Iran must somehow survive simply because it was of so much importance to people like the British that they would never allow it to be obliterated. His Iran would survive because it had a right to do so and was capable of surviving by its own effort.

Sayyid Zia, although by nature more prone to temporise than his rival, also believed that Iran must save itself. His panacea for regeneration was the revival of agriculture and individual craftsmanship. In this he was ready to build on foundations which existed, but Reza Khan, aiming at the development of industry, set out to create something new. He would gather in his people's scattered crafts, harness their native ingenuity and found national and mass-producing industries. Then the secret of the power of the West would at last be theirs. At the same time a local, individualistic industry, ruined by the competition of cheap manufactured goods from abroad, would be transformed into a vigorous entity, protected by tariff controls.

The Sayyid began with the proposal that land should be distributed more equitably. Given to those who tilled it, he believed more would be produced because its new beneficiaries would put out more effort. This belief has persisted until in the last ten years land reform has become the major internal political issue. 1961, '2 and '3 have been the years of intensification of this movement and now rapid transfers of cultivable land have been effected, from a few powerful proprietors to a large number of peasant cultivators. The political aspects of this programme will be discussed later. When in 1921 the Sayyid proclaimed that Crown Lands were to be distributed, he was

doubtless thinking only of raising agrarian productivity and the standard of living of the agrarian worker. Most of the chief landowners were still safely in the detention he had arranged for them and he would not therefore be seriously thinking of that by-product of land-reform – breaking the power of the élite.

In details land tenure varied from one region to another, but throughout the country was in broad outline the same. It has remained the same until the reform programme of the present day. A few peasant proprietors did exist but the main tendency was for most of the cultivable land – about a fifth of the total area of the country, of this fifth approximately one third being actually under cultivation – to be in the hands of owners whose possessions varied from vast estates to quite small ones, and to whom the peasants were almost entirely in fee. Paradoxically, in weakening the Crown the Constitutional Movement removed from the peasant's reach one possible source of redress: the cultivator had been able to look to the throne for a form of patriarchal protection from the exactions of the nobility. Once the throne was enfeebled the nobility, who had in large measure succeeded in capturing the revolution, had no check on their arbitrary exercise of power. The balance was only to be partly restored in recent years with the interesting phenomenon of the Shah again arraying himself with the rural majority against all who are opposed to his land reform measures – landlords, religious classes and, sad to say, the various nationalist and anti-Shah factions descended from the Constitutionalist intelligentsia, still as urban in outlook and as ignorant of the countryside as ever.

The proprietors did not cultivate the land themselves and in many instances seldom saw it. Between them and the peasants was a class of either bailiffs or men who rented the land and its proceeds for a fixed sum from the owner. The renter stood in the owner's place in sharing the produce. Thus the sense of owner's responsibility to land and cultivator existed to a very small degree, if at all. There were scarcely any bonds of sentiment between landlord and peasant to mollify the pressures of extortion applied by intermediaries. The landlord's agents exploited the cultivator and cheated the landlord. Where the latter had chosen to make things easier for himself by renting the land to a speculator, the plight of the cultivator was hardly likely to be better.

The share-cropping system, based on (i) land, (ii) water, (iii) seed, (iv) capital outlay and (v) labour, in regions where expensive irrigation was necessary generally left the cultivator with little over one fifth share, his due under the fifth heading, the labour which he supplied. The owner or his substitute supplied seed, paid for irrigation

works and possessed the water; in some instances, ownership of this commodity meant in practice control of the land, whether title-deeds for it were held or not. The main evil in the peasant's position stemmed from his lack of capital. His relations with the landowner were largely on the basis of payment in kind; but over and above the dues he thus rendered, he needed cash for the purchase of animals, implements and small luxuries and necessities such as lamps, candles, matches, medicines, buttons and so forth. Hence he fell into the hands of moneylenders as well as being utterly dependent on capitalist masters for such basic items of his industry as seed and tools.

While Reza Shah's mind ran on the army, armaments, the metal and textile industries, Sayyid Zia thought of such of Iran's national products as could be made profitable and endow Iran with self-sufficiency with the minimum of plant, being developed along traditional lines as revived cottage industries only expanded slightly and by degrees. At the same time, the export of surpluses as raw materials to the industrial countries of the world was to be encouraged. There was, for example, wool; the Sayyid's sheepskin cap was a constant reminder of this important commodity, as he intended it should be. The export of wool by 1922–23 had fallen from pre-war figures by over fifty per cent. There was also the export trade in hides and skins. In 1921 their export formed an appreciable part of the national product. Among other resources capable of a high degree of intensification were the vine, fisheries, silk, fruits, cotton, tobacco and opium. The American Civil War had given the Persian cotton industry a noticeable fillip and Russia had been the chief purchaser of the raw material. Efforts had been made to improve the staple by importing seed, offered gratuitously by pre-war Russian buyers and, in the early nineteen-twenties, brought from America. Revival of the cotton trade with Russia was in the minds of both contracting parties at the conclusion of the 1921 Russo-Iranian Treaty. Questions concerning the Caspian fisheries figured no less importantly.

In 1867 an exclusive concession for fishing off the southern shores of the Caspian had been granted to a Russian subject named Lianazoff. He established an industry which before the War was producing as much as 540,000 lbs. of caviare annually. The revenue to the Persian Government was about £20,000 but the Russian revolution had brought this thriving industry to a standstill and Lianazoff's concession had been suspended. In July 1919 it had been rented to a person called Vanitzoff for fifty per cent of the profits. Then had followed occupation of the fisheries area by the Bolsheviks, so that the ports concerned were in Soviet hands. The fisheries' importance

to the Russians is shown by Article XIV of the Treaty they concluded with Iran in 1921. 'The Persian Government, recognising the importance of the Caspian fisheries for the food supply of Russia, promises to conclude with the Food Service of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic immediately upon expiry of the legal period of existing agreements, a contract relating to the fisheries, containing appropriate clauses. Furthermore, the Persian Government promises to examine, in agreement with the Government of the R.S.F.S.R., the means of at once conveying the produce of the fisheries to the Food Service of Soviet Russia pending the conclusion of the above contract.' After a great deal of litigation involving the Lianazoff claimants, cancellation of whose original concession was declared in November 1922 to have been invalid, the Soviet Government were able to buy the rights from Martin Lianazoff and finally, in October 1927, Reza Shah agreed to the setting up of an Irano-Soviet Fisheries Company, with a concession for twenty-five years.

Opium was first appreciably exported in 1853 from the Isfahan region. As the silk trade declined, the poppy became more widely cultivated to produce a substitute for the export of silk, the best opium being shipped to London for the extraction of morphine. It became a lucrative product, but dangerous because of the widespread aptitude of the country's inhabitants to resort to the drug to palliate the miseries of their existence. In 1931 the League of Nations applied controls to its cultivation and efforts to curb local addiction have continued until some success has been achieved in recent years, although with loss to revenue, for cultivation has been forbidden and the export trade lost without, as Reza Shah had urged that they should, other nations helping Iran to find a substitute income-gainer.

The silk industry's decline began in 1864 because of disease among the silk worms. The egg was imported from Japan and, sometime after, from Turkey, and from 1890 there was some revival. Though eighty per cent of the crop came from Gilan, silk was also cultivated and silk goods manufactured in Kashan and Yazd; but the resuscitation of the industry, for which Iran had once been famous all over the civilised world, was checked by the 1914–18 war until it received the attention of Reza Shah's government. Efforts to keep it going in spite of the competition of the artificial product manufactured abroad continued valiantly until the last five years, but now the factory at Chalus near the Caspian has been closed and silk fabrics are no longer being made, except in Yazd. There a heavier type of fabric, not as delicate as the Chalus varieties, is still produced but has to be subsidised.

Coming to the country's mineral resources we are brought dra-

matically face to face with the problem that bedevilled the whole economic situation at the outset of Reza Shah's reign, the crippling lack of communications. To take oil as an example: at the beginning of the reign it was still cheaper for the northern part of the country to import kerosine and petrol from Russia than to bring it from Iranian oil-producing areas in the south. The exploitation of other minerals, scattered, although often in not such large quantities as is thought, all over the country, has continued to be handicapped by transport difficulties. In other fields, the outward looking tendency prevalent, until Reza Shah's policy of looking inwards began to have some effect, is manifested in the greater ease with which various regions, notably the north in relation to Russia, could sell and purchase commodities outside rather than feed, and replenish with goods in exchange for those received, the neglected central districts.

Leaving aside oil, the country over which Reza Shah began to rule had mines working on a primitive scale in the following materials and, to show how widely dispersed they were, in the following regions: salt at twenty-nine different places in fourteen provinces of which Azerbaijan was the most productive; turquoise, only at Nishapur in Khurasan; copper in the province of Khurasan and near the southeastern city of Kirman and the city of Yazd, southeast of the centre of the country; black alum in Kashan, Qazvin and Yazd; coal, at about seventeen different spots near Tehran in the Alburz Mountains, and in single ventures in various other regions; orpiment, in Azerbaijan; millstone, near Tehran; sulphate of sodium, between Tehran and Qum, ninety-two miles to the south of it; sulphur, in Khurasan; lead, in Khurasan and near Tehran; graphite near Hamadan in the west; iron in two ventures close to Tehran, one at Karaj and the other at Doshantepe. The Russians had started development, in the early years of the war, of coal and iron deposits in the vicinity of Lake Urumiah and had extended the Julfa–Tabriz railway for this purpose, but subsequent events had called a halt to this enterprise.

One of Reza Shah's aims was the establishment of an iron and steel industry. He followed that other zealous Iranian Prince, 'Abbas Mirza, who in 1815 commissioned a Captain Monteith to explore for iron in Azerbaijan. In 1836 Sir Henry Lindsay Bethune went so far as to import a steam engine and workmen from England in an attempt to work iron and copper mines in the same province. His attempt failed. In 1921 the deposits which were considered most suitable for development were those near Tehran, where coal was also available and proximity to the capital an added advantage. The deposits near Lake Urumiah were too close to the frontier to lend

themselves to Reza Shah's plans for a national steel undertaking. The steel foundry which German experts were building for him was left unfinished at the time of his abdication in 1941. In 1963 it was stated that a project was in hand for sufficient steel to be produced locally for railway requirements, the enterprise being conducted under the direction of the railway authorities. But it is unlikely that Iran will be independent in any but minor railway requirements of steel for a long time to come.

Iran can boast of supplies of almost every known mineral, but generally in small quantities or where the transportation difficulty makes exploitation and marketing prohibitive. In respect of minerals and of other commodities, there is, however, a tendency, and that not exclusively Iranian but in the past shared by foreign adventurers, to believe that the country's mineral resources are greater than in reality they are. Oil is of course excepted. The oil wealth is certainly extensive and is enhanced by the outstanding quality of the product. But oil is usually left out of the reckoning in studies of the economic potentialities of the land Reza Shah assumed control over, because of the feeling that, until Dr. Musaddiq's nationalisation of it in 1951, the oil did not really belong to the nation. Also it was not included in calculations of the national income in the early years of Reza Shah's reign because in those days its full significance was only just becoming perceptible. In records of Sayyid Zia's desperate expedients to find money after the *coup d'état*, oil is not mentioned, and when a short time afterwards it was, the reference was to concession negotiations for the oil in the north, a matter that will receive attention in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, the ever mounting prosperity of the oil industry provided the backcloth essential to the economic development of Reza Shah's reign and was the great credit factor which, after the First World War, contributed most to rendering a repetition of the economic servitude and collapse of the nation impossible. The danger of collapse only recurred when oil was nationalised in 1951 and marketing of it temporarily suspended. By the end of Reza Shah's reign, it accounted for from £3,000,000 to £3,500,000 of the nation's income. These sums were gleaned from royalties and from the dues paid on certain classes of goods imported for the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and from other payments the Company had to contribute under Iranian law and the terms of its Concession, which was revised in 1933. They did not include the wages paid to a force of Iranian labour, which was about twenty thousand in 1940, or the capital value of the Company's plant, regarded until nationalisation as the inalienable property of a foreign concern. Needless to

say, in such monetary calculations the value of the mechanical training many Iranians received in the Company's employment, and also of the educational and medical aids the Company provided in its operating areas, was not included.

The keynote of Reza Shah's economic policy was nationalist protection. Had not his inspiration been, as described in the *Survey of International Affairs* for 1925, 'the ideal of effective national independence as against foreign powers, and effective national sovereignty at home', the system of state monopolies evolved by the new regime in Russia would in itself have been both a spur and an example for the Shah's protective policy. The economic link with Russia was the greatest. Before the First World War, trade with Russia and Britain accounted for over eighty per cent of Iran's external trade. Of this, over sixty per cent was with Russia. In 1930 the U.S.S.R. proceeded to centralise all its eastern trading in a State Eastern Trading Company. In the same year the Russian Fairs were closed. Purchases and sales were henceforth to be made entirely under a monopoly regime which enjoyed the full support of Government. The Persian merchant had lost all the privileges of private trading, and all scope for arriving at equitable prices. Hence, in 1931, Iran established its own foreign trade monopoly; and a process of increasing state control of trade and production, internally and in outside dealings also, began.

After the establishment of the National Bank, which operated as the controlling agency in finance and currency, export and import quotas were increasingly brought under government control. Meanwhile home industries were controlled by various ministries, although generally operated through state companies or monopolies formed for a particular product. For instance, a State Tobacco Monopoly was formed to control the manufacture and distribution of cigarettes and cigars. Besides tobacco, textiles, sugar, cement, matches and the importing and distribution of motor vehicles came under the Government. The importation of luxuries could easily be restricted through this system of state control; where necessary, stopped altogether. Wines, spirits, arms, musical instruments, woollen and cotton goods, silk, crockery, furniture, chemicals and medical drugs could only be imported under licence. Stringent measures were adopted to cover imported goods by an equivalent quantity of exports. Merchants who wished to export had to have a licence and had to deposit their gains in foreign currency in the National Bank, by which they were credited with the equivalent amount in Iranian money. But later in the reign an arrangement was decreed whereby in fact they were entitled to use only half such credits, to pay for foreign imports. The other half

was placed at the disposal of the Government to subsidise students receiving advanced education and training abroad, and to purchase military equipment, or material required by the State Railway and so forth. From March 1932 the old unit of currency, called the *kran*, was changed for the *rial*, based on silver (4.1400 grams to the rial). Private currency dealings were illegal – although a black market flourished, 120 rials to the pound sterling being usual (160 in the bazaar of Baghdad) as contrasted with the arbitrarily fixed rate of 80. From 1927 the issue of currency notes was restricted to the National Bank, the British Imperial Bank of Iran losing its privilege of issuing up to £800,000 worth of notes, negotiable in the district where issued. The effect of these measures of rigorous state control was to increase centralisation in Tehran, to the detriment of the provincial cities, which could no longer maintain their own foreign trade relations directly with countries outside: merchants were compelled to resort to the capital for licences and to an increasing degree for banking business. Another evil by-product of the system was the opportunity it unfortunately afforded for corruption. It conferred on numerous officials powers which could all too easily be abused.

When Reza Shah assumed control he found within the country, especially in the neighbourhood of the capital, the debris of a number of, often foreign-inspired, ventures to promote local manufacture. Wrong siting of the factories, poor communications, the pressure of cheaper manufactured articles from abroad, of far better quality than home products, the lack of efficient labour, lack of experience, local apathy, were among the causes of their failure. Iran's political weakness had meant foreign tariff dictation and deprived her of the means to stem the tide of foreign imports. The Treaty of Turkomanchai in 1828 had started the imposition of free trade on Iran from outside. In their response to Soviet tactics, when the Russians tried at first to continue Tsarist-Russia's tariff privileges, the Iranians confronted a situation already dismally familiar to them; but the presence of a new leader and new spirit made possible a positive confrontation. Customs duties were overhauled and applied with a ferocity which towards the end of the reign became dangerously near to defeating its own object.

The Shah took in hand the refining of sugar, the production of tea and the improvement of the tobacco products. By 1936 a tea-drying factory had been established at Lahijan in the north, to handle the product grown in nearby tea gardens laid out under the guidance of experts from China. Greeks had visited the country to advise on tobacco production. A sugar refinery to deal with beet sugar was

built at Kahrizak near Tehran and by 1935–6 was producing over 2,000 tons of loaf sugar. By 1940, 240,000 tons of beet were being processed annually in this and in eight other small refineries in various regions. Yet still only about a third of the country's total requirement was being met. By 1935 two factories were producing 300,000 tons of cement and in November 1940 a dredger was assembled from imported parts at an embryonic shipyard on the Caspian coast. A total of 40,000 cotton spindles existed at the end of the Shah's reign; the importation of cotton goods and yarn had headed the list of imports at the beginning. In March 1939 an Act was passed which forced all officers and government officials to buy only locally manufactured goods, and a permanent exhibition of what was available was opened in Tehran. Soap, candles, stearine and some chemicals were being made locally, and by 1940 the immense drive to make Iran independent of foreign imports was continuing unabated, only to be halted by the events of 1941 and the Shah's departure.

At first he concentrated on industrial products and the improvement of towns. Nevertheless in 1930 an Agricultural Bank was founded to provide low-interest, long term credit for farmers, a Forestry School was later opened and the Agricultural College which had been established before the reign began was expanded; but it remains true to say that agrarian matters did not receive the attention they should have done in an essentially agrarian economy. Moreover, improved amenities and opportunities in the towns accelerated the flight from the land, which has become a major problem. Under the new civil laws enacted between 1931 and 1932 provision was made for a census every ten years and according to the census of 1940 the population of Tehran had increased to 540,087. Had Sayyid Ziau'd-Din Tabataba'i remained in power it is unlikely that the imbalance between rural and urban development would have been so striking, although there are indications that towards the end of his reign the Shah was beginning to pay more attention to agrarian problems. In 1936 a plan for seven silos was published. The first silo was completed at Tehran in July 1939. The others, at Tabriz, Isfahan, Meshed, Kermanshah, Ahwaz and Shiraz, stood unfinished – huge shells lacking machinery – when the country was invaded two years later. This plan for the regional storage and distribution of grain may have marked the beginning of a significant change in policy. It suggests a possible acceptance of the fact that, reunification having been accomplished, the time had come for some measure of decentralisation and the building-up of regional economy. Each of the zones served by a silo was to be self-supporting

in the basic article of food consumption, bread. Plans were also being made for regional fertiliser plants. These, however, like the plans budgeted for in 1941–2 to give Tehran a piped water-supply, were to be postponed for two decades by the tragedy of 1941.

Chapter 16

The Change of Dynasty

A PIPED water supply was not inaugurated in the capital until 1956. It would be unfair to exaggerate the significance of this, but there are people who judge countries on such matters. The open channels which brought water from *qanats*, and from the canal which tapped the River Karaj, had not been, some would argue, even basically hygienic. But they had been one of the charms of Tehran. The murmur of water running down through the sloping streets of the city had been a pleasant sound on hot nights and, when it was their street's 'water-night', their turn for the cisterns in the house basements to be filled, the servants and children in residential districts would come out and play beside the splashing conduits. Drinking water was brought round in carts and poured into porous jars which held enough to last a day. Now all this has been changed, and the extent of the change gives some indication of what had to be done to transform Iran from the old to the new. This was the transformation Reza Shah's reign began in real earnest.

Sayyid Ziau'd-Din Tabataba'i's first act after the *coup d'état*, as we saw in Chapter XIII, was to round up the notables. His second, repudiation of the unratified Anglo-Persian Agreement, announced on 26th February 1921, five days after he had come to power. On the same day he concluded with the Russians the treaty which had been on the stocks since Mushiru'd-Daulah succeeded Vusugh as Prime Minister in the summer of 1920, though Mushaviru'l-Mamalik had not in fact reached Moscow to begin negotiations until 25th October of that year. As for the Gilan situation, in January 1921 Karakhan, Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, stated in a note that the Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan could not withdraw its troops from the province because of the necessity of protecting itself against British aggression. In this may be seen the spirit, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, the fear and suspicion influencing the Soviet negotiators. Another factor was the Treaty's propaganda value. The Russians published the text as widely as possible. Another, the desire to ensure what geography did so much to make inevitable, that Iran should be economically orientated towards

Russia. Tchicherin declared that 'in brief, the policy of the U.S.S.R. towards Persia is one favouring the growth of independence, political consolidation, and the economic development of the country'. The Romanoff policy of oppression was to be supplanted by one based on 'fraternal relations' between the Russian and Iranian peoples. Statements of this kind were echoed in the Persian press, but many interpreted them as meaning that the U.S.S.R. aimed at military provisions circumscribing Iran's freedom to contract with other powers; at commercial provisions favourable to Russia; and at making propaganda capital.

The Treaty may be summarised as follows:

Article 1. Renounces colonialism and all Tsarist treaties.

Article 2. Deprecates Tsarist treaties with European powers on the pretext of protecting Asian peoples and declares Russia's refusal to participate in any agreement prejudicial to Iran's freedom; all Russian agreements with third parties in respect of Iran are repudiated.

Article 3. Confirms Russo-Persian boundaries established in 1881 but renounces Russia's claims to the island of Ashurada and other off-shore islands in the southern waters of the Caspian. Persia agrees to Russia's retention of Sarakhs, and rights of equal usage are agreed on the River Atrek and other frontier rivers. Provision is made for a joint commission to settle border disputes.

Article 4. Each party is to refrain from interference in each other's internal affairs.

Article 5. Gives an undertaking to prohibit (1) 'the formation or presence . . . of any organisation or groups . . . irrespective of the name . . . whose object is to engage in acts of hostility against Persia or Russia, or against . . . allies of Russia'. The formation of armed troops for this purpose is specifically forbidden. (2) '(To prevent by all means) . . . the presence within their territories or . . . the territories of their allies, of all armies or forces of a third party in cases when such forces would be regarded as a menace to . . . frontiers, interests or safety' of the other party. (3) The importation or transport by a third party or Organisation, across the territory of either contracting party, of material which can be used against the other.

Article 6. If a third party attempts armed intervention for usurpation in Iran, or attempts to use Iranian territory as a base against Russia's or its allies' frontiers, and if the Persian Government should be unable to stop this menace after *once* being asked to do so by Russia, Russia has the right to send troops into the Iranian interior for the operations necessary for its defence. 'Russia undertakes, how-

ever, to withdraw her troops from Persian territory as soon as the danger has been removed.'

Article 7. Applies Article 6 to the Caspian Sea and lays down Russia's right to require Iran to send away foreigners in the Persian Navy if they attempt hostility against Russia. (In 1941 the Persian Navy consisted mainly of two motor gunboats and a small frigate, with a steam yacht as a training vessel and depôt ship, stationed at Khurramshahr on the Persian Gulf. The officers received training in Italy, where the gunboats and frigate had been built. Since the Second World War, two frigates have been acquired from Britain and are on the waters of the Persian Gulf).

Article 8. Renounces Tsarist economic policy, defined as consisting of lending money to Iran to subordinate it to Russia. All debts and loan service security holdings are cancelled.

Article 9. Abandons Tsarist economic undertakings in Iran: the funds and property of the Russian Discount Bank with its assets and liabilities are ceded to Iran, but Russian Consuls may use one building without charge in towns where they exist and a consular post is established.

Article 10. Russia cedes the Enzeli-Tehran and Qazvin-Hamadan Roads, the Julfa-Tabriz-Sufian-Urumiah railway, landing-stages and craft on Lake Urumiah, all Tsarist telegraphic plants and the Enzeli port and electricity installations to Iran.

Article 11. Article 8 of the Turkomanchai Treaty is invalidated along with that Treaty, and so Iran is to enjoy equal navigation rights on the Caspian Sea.

Article 12. Makes all Tsarist rights and concessions null and void, restoring them to Iran with all Russian-owned property, excluding the Legation and Consulates. Russia cedes the right to administer the village of Zargandah (outside Tehran, the seat of the Russian Summer Legation. The British enjoyed similar 'manorial' rights in the neighbouring village of Gulhak, where the British Summer Legation was, and is still, situated).

Article 13. The Iranian Government promises not to cede to a third power, or to any of its subjects, the concessions and property thus restored to it, but to retain them for the benefit of the Persian people.

Article 14. This Article has already been quoted in the preceding chapter: it concerns the Caspian Fisheries. [1]

Article 15. Abolishes Tsarist religious missions and cedes the missions' land and property at Urumiah and elsewhere in Iran to the Iranian authorities for use as schools and for educational purposes generally.

[1] See page 238.

Article 16. Pursuant to the Soviet Note of 25th June 1919, abolishes all forms of extraterritorial rights.
Article 17. Exempts the subjects of both countries from military service or payments in lieu in their respective territories.
Article 18. Accords travel facilities to subjects of the two contracting nations in each other's territory on the basis of the most favoured nation.
Article 19. Provides for commercial relations to be resumed within the shortest possible time after signature of the Treaty. 'The methods to be adopted for the organisation of the import and export of goods, methods of payment, and Customs duties to be levied by the Persian Government on goods originating in Russia, shall be determined, under a commercial convention, by a special commission.'
Article 20. Provides for transit rights on the most favoured nation basis.
Article 21. Provides for a convention to fix telegraphic and postal relations.
Article 22. Provides for plenipotentiary representation with the usual diplomatic privileges.
Article 23. Provides for the opening of Consulates in places to be agreed between the two nations.
Article 24. Provides for ratification within three months.
Article 25. Stipulates that the Treaty be in Russian and Persian, both texts having equal validity.
The signing took place in Moscow on 26th February 1921, the signatories being Tchicherin, Karakhan and Mushaviru'l-Mamalik.

Article 19's leaving various matters for future arrangement meant that the Russian tariff preference, which dated back to the Treaty of Turkomanchai and had been confirmed in a Tariff Convention of 1902, remained unaltered by this Treaty. This fact antagonised Iranian merchants, bringing them round to the support of Reza Khan in the succeeding few years. Between 1921 and 1925 Persian trade suffered severely and in the latter year Reza Khan's right-hand civilian collaborator, Teymurtash, was sent to Russia to negotiate more equitable tariff terms. The Iranian treasury was estimated to have been losing about a million dollars a year through Soviet insistence on maintaining the very low tariff forced on Iran in Tsarist times. Reference has already been made in the preceding chapter to Iranian efforts to set up a trade monopoly system capable of competing with Soviet tactics; also between 1921 and 1925 consent was given for a Russian trading bank to be opened in Iran to facilitate commercial and exchange transactions.

Nevertheless, in spite of such obvious defects, the Treaty was wel-

comed and brought a flourish, greatly assisted by Russian propaganda activities, of Iranian independence. Embassies were put under guard so that foreign envoys could no longer, whether they wished to or not, become the protectors of renegade Persian politicians. (The last Prime Minister before Sayyid Zia's *coup d'état* had fled at once to the British Legation on hearing that the Sayyid and Reza Khan were near Tehran). The concession of an Anglo-Persian Transport Company, started by enterprising Englishmen to run between Baghdad and Tehran, was cancelled. Xenophobia was given a wide rein. But in the Majlis the Treaty did not pass without criticism. Taqizadeh pointed out that by Articles 5 and 6 Russia had given herself scope for action which could endanger Iran's independence; by Article 13 Russia had arrogated to herself another means of bringing pressure to bear on Iran's domestic affairs; also, Article 20 was viewed with suspicion as lending itself to possible abuse. In reply to opposition in the Majlis, Rothstein, the Soviet Envoy, wrote the famous letter of 12th December 1921 which is generally regarded as part of the Treaty and clarifies Articles 5 and 6. They are meant, he averred, 'to apply only to cases in which preparations have been made for a considerable armed attack upon Russia or the Soviet Republics allied to her, by the partizans of the regime which has been overthrown or by its supporters among those foreign powers which are in a position to assist the enemies of the Workers' and Peasants' republics and at the same time to possess themselves, by force or by underhand methods, of part of Persian territory, thereby establishing a base of operations for any attacks – made either directly or through the counter-revolutionary forces – which they might meditate against Russia or the Soviet Republics . . .' In practice this reply has stood Iran in good stead. It was disarmingly specific (for a diplomatic document!) and has given Iran arguments with which to rebut numerous Russian protests since the Second World War about, first, American military aid and, second, Iran's adherence to the Baghdad Pact or CENTO as it is now called. In all these cases, and Russian objections have not been slow in coming, Iran has been able to reply that the arrangements are purely defensive; whereas Rothstein's letter clearly applied to offensive operations.

However, the conclusion of the Treaty coupled with Sayyid Zia's policy gave the Soviet Government an opportunity to begin the infiltration of Iran with its propaganda. The Sayyid was anxious to reassert a diplomatic balance in Iran between Russia and Great Britain. This policy and his Government's cordial reception of the Treaty produced an atmosphere of superficial amity. The Russians

set about profiting from this to the maximum extent possible, as if from a breathing space during which propaganda could be pushed and the seeds of future action sown among the Persian workers. Rothstein, who had once been on the staff of the *Manchester Guardian*, was the man chosen. He arrived as Soviet Ambassador on 24th April 1921. Sayyid Zia, in spite of the cordiality then in fashion, was adamant on one thing, which was that Rothstein should not proceed from the coast to Tehran until the last Russian soldier had been taken off the Iranian Caspian shores. This shows the extent to which the flirtation with Russia was aimed at winding up the Bolshevik invasion of Gilan. Meanwhile, the situation was steadily being made more unpleasant for the remaining British officers and members of the abortive Financial Mission.

One of the side effects which became apparent as a result of the swing towards meeting Soviet demands arose from the dismissal of White Russian officers still in Persian employment. This left a gap which was seized upon by the American Minister. He telegraphed his government the news that officers would be needed to replace the departing Russians. He expressed the hope that the Persian Government would privately contract for at least thirty American replacements so that 'it may yet be possible to prevent disturbances locally and above all to prevent Persia from being driven into the arms of Soviet Russia'. The telegram continued: 'Moral effect of announcing such a step . . . would be enormous as Persians of all classes still have unbounded confidence in America and would probably rally to the support of American officers with sufficient enthusiasm to bring new life into the body politic and act as deterrent to any designs the Bolsheviki [sic] may have. And with the ever-present danger of Bolshevism the world can hardly afford to allow such moral values to remain unused. Furthermore, as the Persian Government is about to conclude a convention with Soviet Russia the presence of Americans would be the test of the latter's sincerity as regards promise of non-intervention provided the British leave . . .'[1]

Obviously some pro-American Iranians had been 'privately' talking to the American Minister, assuring him that such a proposal would be acceptable to the Iranian Government were the United States to make it. (In the study of diplomatic documents relating to more recent times it is often very nearly possible to recognise which Iranian has proffered the advice leading to dispatches which harassed officials in Washington or London have had to consider and write their carefully considered minutes upon, fortunately being in a position to apply standards, in the assessment of the information they receive, often out of reach of

[1] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Vol. II, 1921, p. 633.

the informants). But in this instance, it is unlikely that the Sayyid had given the Americans to suppose that he needed American officers. Later there will be occasion to show that he wanted British officers; but before the end of this chapter reference will be made to at least one Iranian notable who has always fostered Iranian-American relations, and who may have been partly responsible for this emotional telegram. Another factor, no doubt also partly responsible for it, was the 'Red Scare' which was sweeping across the United States in 1921. The next incidences of American concern with Iran were less emotional: one had to do with Iran's finances; the other, with the ambitions of American oil prospectors.

Before discussing the Khoshtaria Oil Concession scandal, further note must be taken of Mr. Rothstein's activities. He began a policy of the 'Glad Hand' at once, making his début in Tehran with a propaganda speech and declaring that the spacious grounds of the Russian Embassy were to be open to the general public, to the workers of Iran, every Friday, Friday being the weekly holiday. Soviet films were distributed free, and the old Russian school was reopened, restaffed with Communists. Through a short-wave receiver in the Legation news came from Moscow and was disseminated in a daily news-sheet. Immediately before Rothstein's day there had been four newspapers of note in the capital, but he had himself been a journalist and press matters were his forte – rather more, one suspects, than diplomacy. By October 1921, five months after he had arrived, there were nine outstanding papers. 1. *Iran*: an official Government paper but publishing material from the Russian Embassy: 2. *Sitareh-ye-Iran* (Star of Iran'): a daily founded in 1917 and in 1921 publishing Moscow releases and, in particular, articles hostile to Britain; it is significant that this paper, broadly speaking, represented wealthy commercial members of the community, hostile to Britain and anxiously watching for a chance to improve trade relations with Russia: 3. *Ittihad* ('Unity'): a conservative paper, but taking Moscow releases: 4. *Vatan* ('Homeland'): an old paper revived after Rothstein's arrival and extremely anti-British: 5. *Mihan* ('The Fatherland'): a nationalist weekly with no connection with the Russians[1]: 6. *Hallaj* ('The Carder'): a nationalist weekly hostile to colonialism: 7. *Tufan* ('The Storm'): representing the Communist Party and publishing dialectical material: 8, *Haqiqat* ('The Truth'): a mouthpiece of the Russian Legation, against the Court and Government; this journal took up the question of the development of trade unions in Iran: 9. *Inghilab-i-Surkh* ('The Red Revolution'): published in Rasht and financed by the

[1] Nasrollah Saifpour Fatemi, op. cit., p. 289.

Russian Consulate-General in Gilan and distributed free. According to N. S. Fatemi the last three papers sought to expose corrupt officials, the incompetence of the Majlis, the effeteness of the Crown, and the inequities of the taxation system. Ultimately *Haqiqat*, *Tufan* and *Sitareh-ye-Iran* were suppressed because of their violent attacks on the government and the British. Rothstein gave their editors asylum, thereby contravening Article 4 of the recently signed Treaty.

He became involved in a number of other ugly incidents, and brought about the fall of the Persian Foreign Minister, while giving rise to two notes of protest from Lord Curzon to the Russian Government in September 1921. Qavamu's-Saltanah, who was by this time Prime Minister in Iran, also protested against this fiery diplomat's conduct and Rothstein was eventually replaced by Boris Shumiatsky.

As will have been gathered, by September 1921 Sayyid Zia was no longer in power. In his actions the idealist had not been proved nicely enough balanced with the realist for continued political success to be possible. He had his practical side, however, and had it not been for the forces that were massing against him, he might have survived. But he selected his priorities clumsily and did nothing to court either the acclaim of the populace or the good graces of the aristocracy. He put the aristocracy in prison and demanded money from them; the populace he disgusted by a series of enactments which impinged upon their private lives and denied them their few luxuries, particularly when he forbad intoxicating liquor; in the cold Persian winter it has been said that cheap spirits are the poor man's overcoat. The Sayyid was trying to incorporate good Islamic principles into a social synthesis with enlightened modernism. This medley might have looked plausible on the pages of his note-books; in practice such attempts to apply religion in every-day affairs seldom work and in any event the Sayyid was endeavouring to organise the people's private lives before he had gained their public confidence. He treated the Court as if he had been sent as something between the scourge of God and a modern school-master. He was throughout terribly handicapped by lack of money. He tried to overcome this difficulty by juggling with the currency. He had in Tehran in 1921 a few expert British financial advisers, but the political climate made his contacts with them difficult to sustain, while the experts' attempts to explain financial theory made him impatient. They had no standing to impose their counsels forcibly. He was, of course, desperately seeking to avoid more foreign loans. He was sanguine that these would not be needed. For the creation of a modern army, however, he believed that foreign officers would

be required and he was of the opinion that they should be British; Russians were out of the question and the Sayyid has never trusted Americans. His final break with Reza Khan was over the retention of British officers.

The Sayyid had also excited the antagonism of the Shah, who personally disliked the small, outspoken journalist. The Sayyid emphatically denies that when he had his first Audience after completing the march on Tehran, he sat down in the royal presence and smoked a cigarette. As he is probably far too truthful ever to have made a successful politician, there seems to be no reason to doubt his word on this point. But that a rumour of this kind was spread about him shows the attitude of the Court and the nobility towards him: he was an upstart. The hostility gave Reza Khan a fruitful opportunity. He soon assumed a protective, rather avuncular role towards the Shah, whom he at first treated with respect and solicitude. He also treated members of the nobility with becoming tact and before long had made himself just sufficiently amenable for them to think that he might be their friend, in contrast to their implacable foe, the Sayyid. Thus the Sayyid's position was undermined.

The first crisis was averted on 25th April. The Sayyid lost and Reza Khan gained the post of Minister of War. In so doing he replaced a senior officer of the Gendarmerie, Mas'ud Khan Keyhan, whom the Sayyid had been careful to retain at the War Ministry. Reza Khan was now in the position he held until he decided he could safely become Prime Minister, with no chance of falling from power, in 1923. From April 1921 for three years he sat as War Minister in successive Cabinets while he liquidated the Gendarmerie, built up the National Army, planned a new Gendarmerie to be a police force for remoter rural and tribal areas, cajoled, employed and, where necessary, immobilised senior officers and, above all, drew into his hands as much government money as possible. He required money because he was engaged in giving the country the security it so badly needed; in suppressing rebellion and reducing the power of the tribes; and in creating a worthy national military force. But, in addition, the possession of funds gave him great personal power. His retention of the War Ministry and the way in which he used this position to his own advantage constitute one of the most important factors in the explanation of how he became Shah.

The second crisis between Reza Khan and the Sayyid was on 6th May 1921. Hitherto the old Gendarmerie had been under the Minister of the Interior. Naturally Reza Khan wanted to control it

himself. Naturally the Sayyid was averse to this, but again he lost and Reza Khan obtained control of the Gendarmerie. Its budget and its officers were now at his mercy. In order to feel himself completely the master of all the available regular military services, only one detail remained to be settled. There was still the question of the British officers. The Sayyid tried to draw the line here. But the Sardar Sipah, as Reza Khan was now called, remembered those frustrating years in the Cossack Brigade when Russian officers prevented their Iranian colleagues from enjoying full executive power. He was not going to be a party to Britishers assuming a similar status and influence in the forces he was striving to create. Also he was anxious not to be encumbered in the crucial years to come by the scruples and inquiries, the prying eyes and shrewd estimates of what was going on, which could be expected from British officers in the Iranian forces, whatever their official position might be. They would always be a nuisance and have to be watched. They would for ever be carrying tales to their compatriots in the British Legation or be used by any intriguing Iranian politician who managed to ingratiate himself with them. Their presence would, for a variety of reasons, be intolerable. The crisis came on 21st May with the Sayyid wanting the British officers to stay and the Sardar Sipah determined that they should go. He was already evincing signs of a frenzied suspicion of every move a British officer made.

On 24th May a number of the Sayyid's aristocratic prisoners were suddenly freed, not on orders from the Sayyid who now saw that his days as Prime Minister were over. Early next day he left for Baghdad. There was an attempt to stop him going farther than Qazvin but he was in the end allowed to leave the country unmolested. He did not return to Iran until the British and Russians were again in force on Persian soil during the Second World War. Reza Khan was all that remained of their joint revolution of three months before, and his next task was to make himself supreme master of the country.

His political acumen prevented him from attempting to do this straight away. In place of the Sayyid he acquiesced in the appointment as Prime Minister of Qavamu's-Saltanah, until the day before one of the Sayyid's captives. Later Reza Khan served Mushiru'd-Daulah as Prime Minister, after, as Minister of War, he had found it necessary to put Qavam under arrest. The Sayyid's departure had given the élite the chance to come out and play again – for the last time until after 1941. Provided nobody interfered with his military arrangements, Reza Khan suffered the old politicians to have a final fling. Qavamu's-Saltanah brought his cousin, Muhammad Musaddiqu's-Saltanah, to the Finance Ministry. It was he who had

fled from his post as Governor of Fars when the *coup d'état* took place. His hiding place in the mountains must have been known in the capital because as soon as Qavam became Prime Minister he sent him a telegram asking him to join the Cabinet.

With Qavam in the saddle, the moment of revenge against Colonel Taqi Khan was not far distant; it will be recalled that the Colonel had been prompt and efficient in arresting Qavam, his superior in the government of Khurasan, and sending him a prisoner to the Sayyid. After Qavam became Prime Minister the Colonel was manoeuvred into the position of appearing to be in rebellion against the central government by his refusal to let senior officers of his force, the Gendarmerie, come from Tehran to inspect his units in Khurasan. Finally he was assassinated and Reza Khan freed of another rival, a Sayyid Zia-man, a patriot and, this time, a clever soldier, too.

Qavamu's-Saltanah's name was in after years to be associated with attempts at reform and reduction of the Civil Service. Throughout the modern period the Civil Service has become an increasing burden on the State; a great bureaucracy of drones. But in 1921 Qavam did not immediately pursue the Sayyid's initial vigorous efforts to reorganise and purge it. However, another of the Sayyid's pet schemes, the establishment of municipalities on modern lines, on the lines, it was hoped of the London County Council, had come to stay, in form if not in substance. The Sayyid had organised a town council for Tehran and, had he remained in power, would have done much more to develop local government. At heart he was a believer in the advantages of strong provincial and municipal institutions in a country as big as Iran and with Iran's regional characteristics. As late as 1959 he was still deploring the paralysis of provincial cities, notable examples being Kirman and Yazd. But in 1921 the times were against him. The primary object was reunification of the country; or, as Wilber observes, the necessity of imposing conformity on it.[1] This meant intensified centralisation, not the reverse as favoured by the Sayyid. Since Reza Shah's reign there has been no government strong enough or inclined to promote greater provincial autonomy. The risks of peripheral political secession are too evident; that they are indicates how far the attempt at imposing conformity has failed, and the extent to which communications development has still to go before a central government can repose complete confidence in its capacity to hold the country together.

The capital has grown out of proportion, both in size and influence, to other cities, to whose denizens, as well as to the rural

[1] D. N. Wilber, *Contemporary Iran*, London, 1963, p. 72.

population, it acts like a magnet. This is not only because it is the centre of power but because it also offers chances of employment which the older cities do not. The difficulty experienced in other Middle Eastern countries, of persuading physicians and professional men to take their skills to the provinces, has become a serious problem. Every Iranian boy is a Dick Whittington. He wants to go to the capital and, once there, too many want to go abroad, to America or Europe. To choose to go out and teach or be a doctor in the villages or in a city like Kirman is considered eccentric. The Government has to make it a condition of teacher-training in the all-free state Teachers' Training Colleges that candidates should spend several years in provincial schools when they have qualified.

Another matter with which Qavamu's-Saltanah's name was to become historically associated was the 'Northern Oil'. He was introduced to this problem in the days of his first Cabinet. It will be remembered that the A.P.O.C. Concession had excluded the five northern provinces. After the First World War the Standard Oil Company of America began negotiating for a concession in northern Iran. On 22nd November 1921 its representatives signed a contract with the Iranian Government entitling Standard Oil to exploit the 'Northern Oil' for a period of fifty years. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company (later called the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company after Reza Shah's decree forbidding the use of the words 'Persia' and 'Persian' by foreigners) entered a protest on the grounds that this concession had already been granted to a Russian subject named Khoshtaria, who had since sold it to the A.P.O.C. At the same time the Sinclair Consolidated Oil Corporation of America also appeared on the scene and the fight looked like becoming triangular, a fact which the Iranians saw might be to their advantage.

The British arrested operators from the Standard Oil Company who had been sent to the Dead Sea in Palestine to begin working a concession there, granted to this Company by the Ottoman Government of Turkey in 1916. As the British retention of Mosul, where Standard also had a concession, hindered their working in Iraq, the American State Department was prevailed upon to demand the 'open door' for American oil prospectors in Palestine, Persia and Mesopotamia (Iraq). However, towards the end of 1921, Sir John Cadman of the A.P.O.C. negotiated an agreement in New York by which Standard was to have a share of the oil in Palestine and Iraq, and the A.P.O.C. a share in Standard's Persian Concession.

This provoked a sharp protest from Russia who demanded the annulment of Standard's concession because, it was alleged, it violated Article 13 of the 1921 Treaty. Under this Article none of the

pre-revolution Russian concessions in Persia, which had been returned to the Persian people, were to be granted elsewhere. It was at this juncture that Qavam displayed an adroitness in which he was not to be found wanting in the years to come. He answered that Khoshtaria's concession had never been valid because it had never been ratified by the Majlis. According to the Constitution, all concessions must receive ratification by Parliament. It was this which in 1946 helped Qavam to cheat the Russians out of another Northern Oil Concession and, at the same time, enabled him to win back the province of Azerbaijan. In fact, when the Khoshtaria Concession had been granted, the Persian Constitution was not in existence; but this was a minor detail which Ahmad Qavam chose, in 1921, to ignore.

Russian pressure was not immediately relaxed and therefore, when Iran informed the Standard Oil Company that its contract was invalid, it might have seemed that Qavam had after all succumbed to Russian protests. To believe this would be to forget that on issues of this kind the Iranian Government has to fight on several fronts at once: it was the accord between Standard and the A.P.O.C., rather than Russian pressure, which brought about this *volte face* – the Iranian Government did not like the feeling that it was becoming the victim of a combination of forces. Moreover, there was still the third party, Harry F. Sinclair, ready to enter the fray. On 10th June 1923, the Majlis passed a law 'empowering the Government to negotiate an oil concession in north Persia with *any* independent and responsible American Co.'[1] This was a clear invitation to Mr. Sinclair, and a press campaign was shortly afterwards started against him in Tehran in which, it is said, the British and the Russians both had a hand. Nevertheless, negotiations were recommenced, this time with Sinclair as well as Standard Oil. The Majlis passed a bill which laid down in detail the basis of the concession which would be acceptable to Iran. It is noteworthy how, at this stage, the Majlis, under Qavamu's-Saltaneh's premiership, was seriously interesting itself in oil matters. The bill provided for the concession going to an American Company: the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was thoroughly alerted to new dangers. The terms of the Concession were accepted by Sinclair alone, in December 1923. The period was for fifty years; royalty payment to the Iranian Government was up by four per cent on the A.P.O.C.'s concession, to 20 per cent of the initial net profits with an increase on a sliding scale to 28 per cent as production rose; machinery and imported materials for the purposes of production were to be exempt from Customs and other duties; and finally, the

[1] M. Fateh, *The Economic Position of Persia*, London, 1926, pp. 42–43; also, N. S. Fatemi, op. cit., pp. 303 et. seq.

Concessionaire had to meet the heavy obligation of floating a loan of ten million dollars to the Iranian Government through American banks.

This last item was the condition which had to be met if the concession were granted, and in the latter half of 1924 Sinclair confessed his inability to raise the loan. It is probable that the difficulty of marketing the North Persian oil had stood in the way of his success in interesting American finance in the venture. The U.S.S.R. does not need Persian oil, and the haul to the Persian Gulf, or through Turkey to Europe, a formidable obstacle today, was far more formidable in 1923. The Northern Oil has never been tapped. It has, however, remained a political bargaining counter.

These negotiations have all the ingredients of a scandal, and the mists of intrigue and double-dealing are in no way dispelled by the fact that the day on which, in March 1924, the Majlis authorised Sinclair's Concession, a fire broke out in the Majlis building, later to be reported as arson with the culprit discovered. Also, it has been suggested that the American diplomat, Mr. Imbrie, was murdered because of the oil discussions. Sinclair's representative made it clear when he left Tehran in the summer of 1924 that it was the attitude of the Soviet Government which made further negotiations impossible. This was perhaps not the whole truth; in 1924 the Teapot Dome scandal of President Harding's administration was beginning to come to light; in 1929 Sinclair went to prison for contempt of the Senate and of a court of law in connection with this. But the statement served to emphasise the political aspect of the affair.[1]

It is perhaps legitimate to connect the assassination of the American Vice-Consul, Mr. Imbrie, with the oil negotiations but this episode probably had as much, if not more, to do with the Sardar Sipah's gradual progress towards the throne. All through the years when oil men were gathering in the tension-ridden capital, Reza Khan was engaged in increasing his power. One of his first tasks was to keep his fellow officers happy. The older ones, as martial rule spread over the land, he made provincial governors. They could thus participate in the spoils that provincial government had to offer and this would help to quell their misgivings on the score of Reza Khan's increasing influence in the capital. Younger men he kept dangling, hopes of preferment alternating with fear of chastisement from the tall, fiery-eyed Minister of War. As he built up and fattened the army, its officers were forced to acknowledge him their master and

[1] See George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran 1918–1948: A Study in Big Power Rivalry*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1949.

benefactor. Without him there would have been no army for them to officer, no pickings for them to share. Hitherto we have seen the spectacle of the carcass of Iran the prey of courtiers, clerics and nobles; now a new element was being rapidly introduced, the army.

The antipathy of many Iranians to the House of Pahlavi is chiefly based on their loathing of this army. It was new and less easily acceptable, less susceptible to being accommodated than the old élite had been. Its arms and efficiency made it ruthless. It was too brutal and mechanical to be brought into any of the traditional compromises. The Shah made it his darling, but it has never become the darling of the people. Uniforms and extortion, heavy boots and the rifle butt came to symbolise a new form of tyranny. In old forms there were always detachable elements and a certain sense of community had existed between tyrants and the people, if only in a common feeling of despair and ineptitude; at worst, in a sado-masochistic nexus generally tempered by a sense of humour in which high and low shared equally, turning the absurdities and cruelties of the human situation into a jest. The army, on the other hand, had nothing humorous about it and has never achieved a place in society, or a tradition. It was, and still to a considerable degree is, regarded as a threat to the cherished democratic ideal and to the freedom of the group and of the individual, both ancient realities in sharp contrast to military uniformity. It implied a threat far more dangerous than the graft of the nobility or intransigence of religious fanaticism and clerical avarice had ever done. The nobility and the clergy, for all their faults and shortcomings, had social virtues which from time to time were exercised for the benefit of the society of which they formed a recognised and integrated part. They had nothing to do with the horrors of the guardroom and military prison. Nobody liked the Sayyid, but when the civilian went, the conquest of the Iranian people by a soldier began.

To employ his officers and give himself the maximum capacity for collecting in his own hands all the strands of political control, the Sardar Sipah valued the useful device of martial law. Martial law raised the Minister of War above everyone else in the government; under its regulations he could, if he wished, arrest the Prime Minister. Also, besides appointing officers as provincial governors and creating armies of the North, South, East and West, each commanded by men directly responsible to himself, he sent out other officers in civilian garb to inspect the various public works projects he was interested in and to represent him in every department of government far and near. Thus a military net-work was spread over the land and the Sardar Sipah had contacts and spies everywhere.

The Minister himself took every opportunity to travel, and on one occasion hastened to Tabriz where his military governor appeared to be gaining too much influence. The Crown Prince had been prevented by the Sardar Sipah from returning to the province from a visit to his brother, Ahmad Shah, in Tehran, for the Sardar Sipah feared the Crown Prince more than he did the Shah and thought it possible that the Prince might join with the tribes in Azerbaijan to make it into a separate state.

On another occasion he personally led the military occupation of the province of Khuzistan. Ahwaz, the provincial capital, became one of the chief military centres in the realm. This was the first of a series of steps which culminated in the arrest of the Shaikh of Muhammarah, Shaikh Khaz'al, who was brought to Tehran, where some time afterwards he died. On this occasion the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company was falsely implicated by calumny in an affray involving the Bakhtiari tribes in the Central Zagros region, and so the Company thus learnt that with the Sardar Sipah in power it had better be careful to avoid embarrassing imputations; and the British Government found it impolitic to lift a finger in defence of the Shaikh of Muhammarah, who had deluded himself into expecting that the British would support him.

The Sardar Sipah not only had the measure of the venal nobles. He was also a master of the use of political innuendo and rumour. He was suspicious and afraid of foreigners. Yet he found that Russian economic preoccupations and internal problems worked to his advantage; while the British oil interest made it easier to come to terms with the English, who were not prepared to run foul of the strong man of Iran. Moreover, the British were by no means unprepared to believe that this strong man was what Iran needed. In 1926 Vincent Sheean, the American commentator, picked up the trend of British policy in Persia as one of 'benevolent inaction'. This was how the British Minister described it, adding that it was 'the last choice left'.

Not only the last choice, but perhaps also the best choice. Reza Khan was putting Iran on its feet and could therefore be considered to be relieving Britain of the necessity of doing this itself, in the interests of having a strong Iran between Russia and India. Nevertheless between 1921 and 1925 Reza Khan was never quite certain which way the British might react to him. Like many Iranians he had an exaggerated, almost grotesque notion of their subtlety. It was not so much an official envoy like the Minister, Sir Percy Loraine, that he feared, as the 'old Persia hands', especially those who knew Persian; men like Sir Arnold Wilson. He once asked the Minister

whether Wilson were coming back to Iran, after Wilson had been employed there for a short time by the A.P.O.C. as its General Manager, and had subsequently left for England. On Sir Percy's replying in the negative, the story has it that Reza Shah walked up and down saying *al-hamdu'lillah*, 'the Lord be praised'. This suspicion of the British was to do Reza Shah and his country the profoundest harm in 1940 and 1941, and be his undoing at the hands of those he had feared the most.

In the days before he became Shah he also had the press to fear. His thirst for funds, and how being Minister of War and commissioned to make the country secure and give it an army facilitated his obtaining them, have already been mentioned. This craving for money can be explained by, among other things, the necessity of at first bribing the press. Newspapers proliferated and yet circulation was very poor so that, as we have seen, editors took to blackmail and flattery to make a living. Newspapers became the vehicles of personal enmities or of boosts for those who paid them well enough. Reza Khan was not popular with the press, and its lurid lights were turned on to his doings and on to those of his generals. It was not long before he abandoned the disbursing of cash and adopted less expensive measures. The director of one paper had his teeth knocked out. The editor of *Sitarah-ye-Iran* was severely whipped. The editor of *Vatan*, Mirza Hashim Khan, was attacked by soldiers and left more dead than alive. The Sardar Sipah claimed that Mirza Hashim's articles criticising the army had so enraged the officers that they had acted without the War Minister's cognisance. In 1924 Sayyid Muhammad Reza ''Ishqi', the poet, was murdered at dawn by unknown assailants; he had for several years written satirical verses and critical articles against the Government.[1] Thus the Terror began. 'Ishqi was regarded by many as another Iranian martyr and his memory is still revered; so long as it is, so long will the reigning House of Iran have to contend with the distrust of many in the community.

As has been suggested, the Sardar Sipah had more or less neutralised the Russians and the British. In spite of the 'subtlety' of the latter, their aims and interests were becoming sufficiently clear, especially by December 1925, after the Shaikh Khaz'al incident, for Reza Khan to be able better to gauge how far they would be likely to go. The Americans were different. They made moral pronouncements. They had emotions which might possibly be turned to advantage (the British, it seemed, had none); but they were deadly earnest men (the British could be engagingly nonchalant). They were also a

[1] He edited the opposition paper, *Qarn-i-Bistum* ('Twentieth Century').

comparatively new factor in the situation. Furthermore, they had ways of appealing to foreign opinion. They quickly became alarmed and their news reporters were inveterate publicists; they could publish news to damn or to justify the actions of governments anywhere. Martial law might be adversely commented upon as harsh and providing a cloak for heinous crimes. But if it were seen to be necessary to safeguard people's lives, then comment would be kinder.

Apart from all this, the Americans seemed, with the exception of some of their oilmen, to be high-minded men. Whatever the agents of oil companies might do, the Financial Mission under Millspaugh, which had been engaged in September 1922, remained quite aloof from such transactions, even to the extent of risking obloquy at home. Now the Sardar Sipah was running into difficulties with Dr. Millspaugh. Millspaugh's aim was not so much to reorganise the fiscal system as to devise a more efficient method of collecting existing taxes. When his predecessor, Morgan Shuster, had similarly realised that Iran's taxes could, if properly collected, produce enough for solvency, he had found a system which was roughly divisible into two categories, of regular and irregular levies. Regular levies included taxes on land and animals, while shop-keepers and craftsmen paid through their group organisations and bulk levies were raised on tribes, and a further source of revenue was receipts from Customs, rents and leases of State domains. Irregular receipts came from public requisitions in times of stress; presents to the Crown or its representatives on festivals; fines and confiscations. By 1925, the position was briefly that the land tax still held the first place as a source of revenue, a tax in produce paid in cash or in kind. This was often, it must be admitted, unfairly and imprecisely assessed because of insufficient and infrequent revisions to make allowances for fluctuations in prosperity in a country where, due to water failure and other causes, cultivation can go out of existence in one area, to rise in another, untaxed district. Thus ruined areas might be paying taxes while more prosperous regions were exempt. The State domains had, however, been brought under more direct and more effective government supervision. Indirect taxes were also being more efficiently derived from opium, tobacco, wines, spirits and through the Customs. Thus between 1923–4 Millspaugh succeeded in nearly balancing the budget: revenue was approximately £5,768,763 and expenditure approximately £5,827,944. His work had not been in vain. He introduced a pattern of tax procedure which was to remain unaltered in its essentials for the rest of the period which this book covers. Payments in kind were abolished in 1930 but new levies on tea and sugar, to pay for the railway, were introduced in 1925

while he was still in office; he left in 1927. Income tax was introduced during his second term of office, in 1942, after Reza Shah's abdication.

There is no reason to suppose that Reza Khan was other than grateful between 1921 and 1925 to Dr. Arthur C. Millspaugh for doing so much to make his country financially viable and to pave the way for the establishment, in 1927, of the National Bank. But the Sardar Sipah's distrust of foreigners and yearning for Iran's freedom from their presence, and particularly his mounting ire at Millspaugh's hesitancy over army estimates, made him glad to dispense with the Doctor's services. Dr. Millspaugh was scrupulous about legality and considered it essential to the effective establishment of financial efficiency that the finances of every Ministry be investigated by the Treasurer General – including the Ministry of War. Over this and over the Sardar Sipah's claim that half the budget should be set aside for army estimates, there was trouble between the two men. At this stage a group led by the pro-American Husain 'Ala, to whom allusion has already been made, and called the Friends of Irano-American Unity, helped to heal the breach and Dr. Millspaugh stayed another three years. In July 1927, however, the Majlis refused to renew his special powers and his Mission was wound up; Reza Shah was reputed to have said that there could be only one Shah in Iran and there was no question about who that would be. By July 1927, the Majlis was little more than a department of Reza Shah's government, for the obedient passage of the Shah's decrees and for the publication, through discussion, of his more laudable schemes.

As if to show the Americans that they were no more acceptable in the eyes of the Iranians than any other foreigner, in 1924 their young Vice-Consul, Mr. Imbrie, was murdered in a street brawl during the final years of Qajar rule.[1] What was abnormal about this episode was its nature contrary to the usual pattern of Iranian behaviour towards foreigners whom, however much they may dislike them, they are extremely reluctant to injure physically. Fear of reprisals in the days of Russo-British domination may have assisted in imposing this restraint, but more than anything else there is the Iranian's genuine respect for anyone he considers his guest; the average Iranian is a very peaceable person and almost overwhelmingly hospitable. Foreigners have very seldom, extraordinarily seldom, been murdered, or even openly insulted. The massacre of Griboedov and his companions was an exception, to be attributed to unnatural passions aroused in a defeated nation by a combination of circumstances in

[1] He was murdered on 8th July 1924, three days after the poet 'Ishqi's assassination.

which religious fanaticism and court intrigue were both involved. Imbrie is only the second case of a diplomat being murdered in the capital, and evidence exists to indicate that, although there was a mob present, he was not done to death by the multitude but slain by someone in soldier's uniform.

He had been advised that it would be safe for him to photograph a religious riot, caused over a fountain to which magical healing powers had been ascribed. This advice was very dangerous, but he followed it and got himself into a position, with a camera, where it was not unlikely that he might be in danger of attack. That he was attacked and killed provided two facts which it was useful to impress on foreigners. First, that Qajar rule was too weak to control either the fanaticism of the clergy or the religious and xenophobic passions of the mob. Second, that martial law in the capital was absolutely necessary to ensure order and safeguard lives. The Sardar Sipah himself made particular and almost abject apologies to the United States Minister for Mr. Imbrie's tragic death.

In October 1923 Reza Khan became Prime Minister and Ahmad Shah, leaving the Crown Prince as Regent, left for Europe never to return. It was also in 1923 that Mustapha Kamal declared a Republic in Turkey and the Sardar Sipah seems to have seen the possibility of ending Qajar rule by adopting a similar expedient. His aim was to find some way of expelling the old dynasty. He had to be wary. A press campaign which exposed Ahmad Shah's peccadilloes in Paris, where he was photographed, in a straw hat and white flannels, surrounded by young ladies, was by no means enough to destroy the deep-seated loyalties which hedged the throne. The Sardar Sipah had to cultivate the religious classes, and British difficulties with Shi'ite leaders in Iraq helped him to pose as the protector of the Faith when he acted generously towards the mujtahids and mullas whom the British deported from the Holy Cities in Iraq and who came to Iran for refuge. In doing this he also embarrassed the Shah, who, still regnant, was forced into the invidious position of having to risk either incurring disfavour with the British or arousing the suspicion of his people that he had no respect for religious dignitaries leading an anti-British movement. The Sardar Sipah's cultivation of religious leaders won him, in 1922, a presentation sword of honour from the Holy Places; he gave a large reception in his house in Tehran to make sure that as many people as possible saw him gird it on. There was also talk of a dream in which 'Ali invested him with a mission from Heaven. He communed with – and bountifully fed – a host of religious persons of all degrees. The doors of his house in Tehran were open to all such men and such men are always

pleased to sit down to somebody else's dishes of pilaw and to kababs broiled on another's hearth; Sardar Sipah's open invitations did not go unheeded

These were days when the Sardar Sipah was exercising all his charm and lavishly entertaining in the fashion much liked by Iranians. The leaders of the merchant community were inclined to support him, for he had given the country a greater measure of security than it had known for many years and had shown himself the merchant's friend. An exhibition of national products was opened in Tehran under his initiative. It displayed the woollens and silks of Yazd, Kirman and Kashan; the hand-block printed, *qalamkari* cottons of Isfahan; Shiraz and Isfahan silver-work; the mosaics of Isfahan and the pottery of Natanz, Qum and Hamadan; woods and cereals and fruits whose quality had recently been much improved. The exhibition was a great success.

In 1924 the fifth Majlis began its sessions. Reza Khan's officers in the provinces had not been idle during the elections, yet there were in the Majlis nationalists who might prove difficult. Among them were Mirza Hasan Khan Mushiru'd-Daulah and Mirza Hasan Khan Mustawfiu'l-Mamalik, both highly eminent, respectable former Prime Ministers; but in the end they were to prove malleable. There were also Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh; Dr. Musaddiqu's-Saltanah; Mirza Husain Khan 'Ala, and a cleric, Aqa Sayyid Muhammad Musavat – who was not, however, a member of the faction led by another divine, the implacable (but not quite incorruptible) Aqa Sayyid Hasan Mudarris of Isfahan. The redoubtable Isfahani mullas had already been worsted by Mahmud Khan Amir Iqtidar, one of Reza Khan's military appointments to a governorship. It had been a very shrewd appointment, to a city from whose mullas the Sardar had plenty to fear. Mahmud Khan had himself completed a theological course before coming to other things. He therefore knew the idiom of the mullas of his city inside out. But he had not resorted to clumsily brutal measures against them. He had simply made certain that the people had no cause to resort to the mullas, and in this way he had whittled away their scope for political action. Finally, they themselves made a fatal move. The American Financial Mission introduced measures controlling the curing and disposal of the opium crop. The mullas intervened against this regulation and gave Mahmud Khan his chance to crush them once and for all.

The Sardar Sipah's supporters in the fifth Majlis were known as the Reformists, the *Tajaddudis*, and were led by Sayyid Muhammad Birjandi Tadayyun. They were financed by some of the leading merchants. This Majlis was faced with the possibility of having to do

violence to the Constitution, for the Sardar Sipah's intention of removing the Qajars was apparent, but the continuance of the sovereignty in the Qajar family was guaranteed by the Fundamental Law. The Sardar Sipah let the rumour of a republic mature and got himself made Commander-in-Chief of the forces (instead of the King) by a great majority in Parliament. This was only after much discussion, however, between him and some of the Deputies, several of whom had formed a sort of unofficial council with him to advise him on constitutional matters and questions of public opinion. It is interesting that this group, which met the Sardar Sipah in conditions of semi-secrecy in his or one of their private houses, included Dr. Musaddiq as well as Husain 'Ala; it was an attempt by a few intellectual and democratic men to guide the new leader in such a way that he would do nothing to violate the Fundamental Law and injure the people. No doubt the various members of the group also had their own personal motives. These motives were not of a selfishly ambitious nature, but sprang from a respect for established institutions and the desire to do all possible to preserve the Qajar dynasty, to which Musaddiq, for example, was related by blood. But it is ironical in the light of subsequent events that it was Musaddiq, the lawyer, whose interpretation of the Fundamental Law eventually made it possible for Reza Khan to be elected Commander-in-Chief. Dr. Musaddiq ruled that the Fundamental Law *did* empower the Majlis, in certain circumstances, to confer the command of the country's forces on a person of its own choosing.

Meanwhile poets were commissioned to compose encomiums of the republican ideal and the Sardar Sipah began to show increasing anxiety to have the Republic of Iran, with himself as President, declared before the Iranian New Year on 21st March 1924. This was because New Year's Day was customarily the occasion for a special Court to be held at which the Shah showed himself to his people and received their salaams. Although on this 21st March the Shah would not have been present, but instead the Crown Prince, Reza Shah was anxious that there should not again be any such rites of homage to a Qajar Prince. In spite of the fact that he did not succeed in having a Republic proclaimed, he did prevent the 'Salaam' being held.

As he tried to hasten the birth of the Republic there were serious demonstrations against the idea of it and against him personally. His Army Fête of a short time before had been conspicuously unsuccessful, noticeably ignored by the populace at large. Then on 3rd March the Turkish Parliament abolished the Ottoman Caliphate and disestablished the Muslim clergy in Turkey. Although the sect thus penalised by a Republican Government was Sunnite and not

Shi'ite, the latter the sect of the majority of Persians, nevertheless for the Persian *'Ulama* and many of the people the warning had been sounded. The idea of a republic at once became abhorrent to the mullas, who saw in it the danger of losing their privileges. Reza Khan acted with adroitness and anticipated growing clerical opposition to him by himself hurrying to Qum to consult the chief religious dignitaries before, on 29th March, issuing a proclamation to the effect that the establishment of a republic would be contrary to the Islamic Faith. This was arrant nonsense but it was clever politics. It was also the last time Reza ever bowed to the clerics.

At last, after many meetings in his houses, in the town and up in the hills according to the season of the year, and after a large gathering one evening in the town house, when an attempt was made to persuade deputies and others to sign a document agreeing to his assumption of supreme authority; and after he had indeed been vested with plenary powers by Parliament and had long since ceased to show even common courtesy to the Crown Prince, and had assumed the semi-regal title of *Hazrat-i-Ashraf*, which may be translated 'Highness', the ultimate goal had to be achieved and the Constitution altered so that the crown might be conferred on Reza Khan and his heirs. For a considerable time the Majlis had done little more than legalize actions which he had already decided upon; the day had to come when it should legalise his assumption of sovereignty. Titles had been abolished, by the Sardar Sipah – which in itself was insulting to the absent Monarch, who as the fountain of honour was technically the only person who, while he still reigned, had the right to abolish titles – and the Sardar Sipah had taken the family name of Pahlavi. The new dynasty was to have a name redolent with the ancient glories of Iran and the name was distinctly pre-Islamic.

Ahmad Shah was deposed on 31st October and on 12th December 1925 Reza Khan was voted Shah by the Majlis, convened as a Constituent Assembly, with only four votes against the measure and a number of deputies absent – they included the Mustaufiu'l-Mamalik and Mudarris – whose views were never ascertained. There were about thirty abstentions, and 115 in favour. The four who had the courage openly to show their disagreement were all, with one exception, destined to play outstanding roles in the future and, in the case of Taqizadeh, had already played important roles in the past. With the exception of Husain 'Ala (died 1964) and the less famous, but no less courageous and perhaps most honest of them, Yahya Daulatabadi, they are still alive in 1965. They were Taqizadeh, Husain 'Ala, Musaddiqu's-Saltanah and Yahya Daulatabadi. Each

of them made a short speech from the tribune. Dr. Musaddiq said: 'The presence of the Sardar Sipah in the position he is now in, that is to say, of Chief Minister, is good for the country. But were he to become Shah, under law he would no longer have responsibility[1] and the advantage the country now enjoys from his presence would be enjoyed no more, unless, after ascending the throne, he still wanted to be a responsible minister. This would be contrary to the Fundamental Law and a kind of government without parallel elsewhere . . .'[2]

[1] i.e. as a Constitutional Monarch he would not be responsible.
[2] Yahya Daulatabadi, op. cit., p. 386.

Chapter 17

The New Order

DR. MUSADDIQ's remarks about the advantage of having Reza Pahlavi as Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief were not intended to be sarcastic. With Reza Khan as head of the Government the fifth Majlis had been able to achieve a great deal. What men like Dr. Musaddiq feared was that, as Shah, Reza would be less willing to take the counsel of civilians than he was as Prime Minister. The Iranians are similar to the British – politically fundamentally much more so than is generally recognised – and they prefer compromise arrangements. There was room for compromise so long as Reza Pahlavi played Benito Mussolini to a Qajar House of Piedmont. During 1924 and 1925 the compromise had been working tolerably well. In spite of the excitement over the proposed republic and Reza Pahlavi's distressing regal ambitions, which filled the minds of many intellectuals and responsible politicians with uncomfortable forebodings and from time to time reduced Muhammad Hasan Mirza, the Crown Prince, to tears of anguish, nevertheless many useful reforms had been enacted. The fifth Majlis was able to introduce valuable legislation because of the security which Reza Pahlavi had conferred on the country. He himself also initiated many of the beneficial measures the Majlis passed. But he enjoyed the advice and guidance of men, one of whom was Dr. Musaddiq, who were able to make the compromise work, by which Reza Pahlavi's strength and determination were combined with their talents and patriotism. The Shah had been absent, but to upholders of the Constitution there was nothing wrong in this. Reforms could be consolidated and in due course the Shah could return, to reign as a Constitutional Monarch in a kingdom much better administered than before. The four men who opposed Reza Pahlavi's accession did so because in it they saw yet another set-back to the gradual development of constitutional government, of which Britain provided the ideal form.

Musaddiq, as all the world discovered in 1951, remained in the wilderness of opposition and mistrust, his zeal turning to hysteria in the years of frustration. But it is not the hysteria which his supporters remember; he became a hero because of his long and lonely stand

against a military, non-democratic regime. His honesty and integrity were once by-words and noted with praise by British observers. There will be occasion later to see what he did in his moment of glory; the indications are that it had been too long deferred.

Daulatabadi left Iran to pass his declining years in foreign lands. Taqizadeh served Reza Pahlavi and then incurred his displeasure and found refuge in England. After Reza Shah's abdication, he was restored to favour and dramatically exchanged the humble occupation of a teacher of Persian in London for that of his country's Ambassador, to become an urbane and scholarly host in the beautiful Persian Embassy in Prince's Gate. Afterwards he was President of the Senate, the chamber which had been provided for in the Constitution but was not convened until 1950.

Husain 'Ala took notice of the maxim about joining what cannot be defeated and, especially after the Second World War, became an important modifying influence. He usually held the post of Minister of Court, but sometimes he was Prime Minister, generally in a caretaker type of government. His services to the country deserve the highest praise because he was neither negatively aloof nor, when in power, destructive, as Musaddiq was. And he was never uncertain or ambiguous in his chosen part, as Taqizadeh has sometimes appeared to be. In other words he accepted the regime as it fashioned itself and then proceeded to play the essential role of remembrancer, guide, liaison between the Crown and political groups: the man who could ensure some degree of continuity and represent to others what had happened in the past and what the consequences of their acts might be in the future. Ultimately he perhaps did more than anyone else to apply himself steadily to the evolution of constitutional government. He gained very little popularity and yet there are few who do not, even if they do not confess it, respect his memory, and, even in the most difficult times, he had access to all sides. One remembers the tired little figure in a neat suit and bow-tie, sitting in the back of a limousine being sped from the Majlis or the Cabinet Office to the Shah's summer palace outside Tehran in the difficult days after the fall of Musaddiq, when men like Husain 'Ala were trying once again to revive a distracted nation. Perhaps it was at Westminster School or in his young days as his country's envoy to Washington that he learnt to keep secrets and handle many different types of men. Wherever it was, he succeeded in being extraordinarily loyal to his country and the confidant not only of its Shah but of many most hostile to the master he so conscientiously served. He deserves the justice of history and his death, in July 1964, was a great loss to Iran.

But this is to look beyond the reign of Reza Shah into his son's

times. During Reza Shah's time only one man could do anything; of the rest, obedience or silence were all that was required. As Taqizadeh said, in the moving speech he made in 1951 when charged with complicity in concluding the 1933 Anglo-Iranian Oil Concession, those were the days when there was only one actor, everybody else being tools in his hands.

The achievements of the fifth Majlis, however, predate the assumption of this awful supremacy. They included the organisation of an Economic Committee, which pleased Millspaugh, who often attended its meetings, as from time to time did the Sardar Sipah, Reza Khan himself. This Committee took up the freeing of the roads from payment of *rahdari*, a toll for road maintenance and protection; the abolition of gate dues payable at city gates (in 1924 Tehran was still a walled city); improvement of means of transport by asphalting roads and providing more trunk routes; improvement of agricultural products; and the removal of Customs duties on imports destined for projects such as road construction, improved communications and transport services. The Committee marked the beginning of the practice of forming bodies outside the parliamentary and ministerial frame-work to promote development policy.

The formation of such bodies has been prominent since the Second World War. The Plan Organisation set up by the Majlis in 1949 was in a sense descended from this 1924 Committee through the High Economic Council established in 1937 to plan for the country's economic development. Such bodies were intended to direct government economic and development policy, but to be outside politics. In the case of the Plan organisation, the small beginnings of 1924 resulted in an institution raised to the status of a department of government, whose function is not only to initiate development policy but also to see to the completion of measures thus set on foot, having its own budget and technical experts. Control of this finance and direction of the experts are vested in a Managing Director who is integrated with the political system by being designated as deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister remaining answerable in the House for the Organisation's actions. How this arrangement has worked in practice will be seen later. Here it is mentioned as the culmination of the process started in 1924, when a group of the Sardar Sipah's advisers, encouraged by Dr. Millspaugh, who were also members of the fifth Majlis, established their committee.

The process was in a large degree the response to the lack of any political party mechanism. Parties with their own technical programmes did not exist and have not so far been developed. Instead there have only been factions concerned exclusively with short-term

political ends. These factions failed to attract permanent loyalties or to adopt carefully considered plans based on clear principles of political representation of certain groups of the community, and the fostering of specific types of economic advancement. The factions were thus only Majlis splinter parties. They consisted of small numbers of deputies, sometimes with a few outside supporters, generally gathered round a leading personality and cohering only so long as certain narrow group or personal interests were being served. This absence of any doctrine or platform based on the national interest has enfeebled the democratic fabric and left room for the evolution of dictatorship by the Crown, government by agencies independent of Parliament, and the rise of the Communist Party as the one party with a national programme and definite principles. During Reza Shah's reign only one of these factors was at the surface, the first, all power being concentrated in the hands of one man. The tragedy came in 1941, when his removal left scope for the formation of political parties but again only factions emerged.

The fifth Majlis also increased educational allocations to pay for expansion. Compulsory education was instituted. Higher Teachers' Training Colleges for men and women were improved in the capital, where one had existed since 1918, and opened in provincial cities. A bill was passed which provided for a hundred of the best school-leavers to enter a competition each year for government-subsidised training abroad. A Conscription Bill was also passed, unanimously once the offending word 'compulsory' had been dropped in the wording of the Act. This enactment had the effect of distributing between urban and country people an obligation which had formerly rested only on the countryside. The latter had been expected to provide men for the services while landowners furnished the cost. After the Conscription Law, the cost was transferred to the State. Conscription resulted in the spreading of rudimentary education to areas which hitherto had been deprived of any education. Stringent regulations, strengthened in the following years, were laid down to prevent evasion. They included provision for the frequent changing of recruiting authorities in the various districts. Nevertheless, it has proved impossible to prevent abuses and, although care was taken to obviate hardship, hardships and malpractices have not been eliminated and military service has never become popular. It is, however, unfair to judge the system on the performance in the years following 1941. In that year the Iranian army was unable to save the country from occupation by foreign forces. As a result it suffered in prestige. But the Allies reported favourably on the conduct of the ordinary Iranian soldier, and during Reza Shah's reign military service did

much to strengthen the morale and broaden the outlook of the youth of the nation.

One of the abuses whose abolition under the fifth Majlis has already been noticed was that of titles. In this way a perquisite of the Court and of the Sadr-i-'Azam, the Chief Minister, was removed Titles had been sold to the enrichment of the Shah and the men through whose hands petitions for them had to pass on their way to the throne. They had proliferated to such an extent that, titles having run short, the same one had in many instances been conferred on several people, which caused confusion. Their abolition introduced a new mobility into society because former holders of titles were freed by the removal of their pompous styles to seek ordinary, wage-earning employment. This reduced the parasitic element and liberated manpower for the new organisations, such as the railway, that were shortly to provide unprecedented avenues of occupation. A 'Nizam Sultan' or 'Qavamu'l-Mulk' could less easily sue for a job as a railway clerk or become a schoolmaster than could a plain 'Aqa'i Poluri' or 'Aqa'i Shirazi'. *Aqa* was used for 'Mr.'; *Khanum* and *Banum* as equivalents for 'Mrs.'

Persons claiming descent from the Holy Family of Islam retained the title of *Sayyid* but religious designations like *Hajji*, indicating that the holder had performed the pilgrimage or *hajj* to Mecca, and epithets such as *Karbala'i* or *Mashshadi*, showing that a man had made the visitation to the shrines at Karbala in Iraq or Meshed in Khurasan, were dropped. Well-known figures who had been called by their titles often continued to be styled as before, Qavamu's-Saltanah, for example, is generally spoken of by this title rather than as Ahmad Qavam. Older people still speak of Dr. Musaddiq as Musaddiqu's-Saltanah. Often, however, there is a touch of pedantry, or of contempt, in the continued reference to certain eminent men by their old titles. Indeed, they recall an age which passed with the accession of Reza Shah. The titles were a relic of the Qajar dominion.

Under Reza Shah a new aristocracy came into being, and an attempt was made to decimate the old. A new class of rich men grew up, many of them those senior army officers whom the Shah favoured. A new class of entrepreneurs also came into existence. Opportunities provided by public works contracts during the reign were continued because of the requirements of the occupying armies after Reza Shah had gone. The sons of messengers and servants became contractors and millionaires. Fortunes were amassed by men ready to enter the import trade in fields new and unfamiliar to the established merchants of the bazaar; machinery, motor vehicles,

spare parts, plant of all descriptions, things which the older type of tea, sugar and cloth merchant was slow to adopt. On the other hand many of the older aristocracy retired from public affairs and some of them, especially those in provincial cities, declined in fortune. Mushiru'd-Daulah, whose name has so often appeared in these pages, is an example of one who chose retirement. He was commissioned by Reza Shah and the fifth Majlis to supervise the elections for the sixth Assembly, but later he became almost a recluse and devoted himself to writing the history of Iran. Others went abroad and some suffered the penalties of the new ruler's sensitivity to what he took to be slights, and of his suspicion of opposition. Musaddiq suffered imprisonment. Many of the notables also suffered from the Shah's increasing covetousness, especially as he grew older. A choice estate had only to win his praise to become his. There is a story about Vusughu'd-Daulah. During the reign of Reza Shah, Vusugh would borrow small sums every month from a court jeweller in the bazaar who was connected with him by marriage. There was nothing surprising in this relationship; the merchant in question was a Sayyid and well-to-do-Sayyids often married into aristocratic families, the fact of their being Sayyids making such a match respectable and desirable, while wealth was an added attraction. The jeweller was often in the old days a banker and pawn-broker as well; he would often help great men with advances of ready money such as Vusugh required. One day the Sayyid's young son, who took Vusughu'd-Daulah the sums he required, and would be asked by the old gentleman to stay and sing him some of the verses of Hafiz or a piece of Maulana Jalalu'd-Din Rumi's poem, the *Masnavi*, had the temerity to give way to his curiosity. Sitting with Vusugh in his beautifully furnished mansion, the boy asked him why he had to borrow small sums of money. Vusugh sent for his account books and opened them to reveal nothing but debts. He said: 'If anyone wished to see what wealth I had, these pages would surprise them. Now run along and be careful not again to ask impertinent questions.'

There is another story, about a favourite daughter of Muzaffaru'd-Din Shah. She was extremely wealthy and very high-spirited. During Reza Shah's time she was known to go out into the tree-lined avenues of Tehran (many of which she owned) and collect wood for fuel. On being asked why she did this, she replied that she had to because she was so poor. Reza Shah relented and is supposed to have said that Khanum Fakhru'd-Daulah, the lady in question, was the only 'man' of the Qajar family; she was the mother of Dr. Amini whom we shall meet later as Prime Minister and holding other important offices in post-war governments.

The sons of this aristocracy, which was in danger of being eclipsed and in perpetual danger of being deprived of its wealth between 1925 and 1941, survived to take a leading part in affairs after Reza Shah's abdication. They became deputies in Parliament and their family names; Pirnia, Amini, Hedayat, Bushihri, etc., were to reappear in public affairs alongside the names of new men, the sons of their former clients and dependents. History has not yet done with Iran's old landed aristocracy; nor with those newly rich creatures of the Pahlavi regime who emulated them, and who have also invested in land.

During the sessions of the fifth Majlis the Arabic and Turkish names for the months of the year were changed to the old Persian equivalents. Rhymes were made up to help people to memorize the readopted ancient Iranian names, like

When you pass from FARVARDIN to URDIBIHISHT
You come to KHURDAD and then to TIR,

and so on through the twelve. The first six months had thirty-one days each, the second, thirty with the last month variable for intercalary years. The Iranian Solar Year was adopted in place of the Arabic Lunar Year. The present solar year is 1343, equivalent to 1964–1965 and commencing from 21st March, the Vernal Equinox and Persian New Year's Day.

Great efforts went into the preparation of new school text-books and some tentative reorganisation of religious endowments was embarked upon to find money for the educational expansion; the endowments had been overseen under the Ministry of Education from its inception by the second Majlis in 1911. With the desire characteristic of new dynasties in Persia to obliterate traces of the preceding dynasts, the removal began of certain endowment plaques in Mosques and Madrassehs because, it was claimed, they bore references to the Qajars. There were not wanting those who charged that this was done to facilitate alienation of religious funds from the causes they had been intended to support. None the less, the Higher Council of Education, which was set up in 1921, included in its terms of reference the discussion of using *vaqf* endowments, the religious endowments, for the support of state schools. It also had powers to examine the qualifications of persons wanting to open private schools; and the power to create a sub-committee to inspect and improve the *maktab* schools run by religious authorities. Among the recommendations for the Higher Council was one that it should seriously study European systems, and it was also to improve the curriculum of Teachers' Training Colleges.

From this beginning a new order was rapidly introduced into

education, which became almost entirely state controlled and entirely uniform. Students in all the national schools sat examinations administered by the Ministry of Education in Tehran at the end of the sixth, ninth and twelfth grades. Successful candidates received an official government certificate. The new system allowed for a twelve-year course, six years in the primary grades, where writing, Persian, arithmetic, geography, history and physical education were emphasised; and six years in the secondary school. The secondary schools were modelled on the French lycée system, with two three-year cycles. The curriculum has gradually become very crowded, the load on students rising in any given year of the course to as much as fifteen subjects. This is one of the system's chief drawbacks; it leads to a great deal of cramming and learning parrot-fashion with far too little scope for development of personality or the capacity to think and discover problems and the means of their solution. Part of the trouble is in the inadequacy of the teachers.

The first year in the secondary school (seventh grade after completion of six grades in the primary school) includes the sudden broadening of the child's studies to embrace geometry, natural science, a foreign language (generally French in the earlier days, English, since the Second War), Arabic, world history, and hygiene. The next two years include the addition of algebra, biology, physics, chemistry, geology, and mechanical drawing; but laboratory facilities were practically non-existent and are still poor, the teaching mainly being theoretical. In the final three years the subjects taught include trigonometry, solid geometry, zoology and elementary economics, philosophy and logic. Physical training and discipline are mark-carrying subjects up to the final grade and last certificate. Specialisation, into Science, Mathematics and Letters, is possible during the final three years. The study of Persian is divided into grammar, texts and literary history, which further increase the number of subjects.

With such an ambitious educational programme being introduced, the need for qualified teachers was a pressing problem. The Teacher Training Act of March 1934 called for twenty-five training colleges in five years and by the time Reza Shah abdicated there were thirty-six teachers' training colleges to cater for various grades all over the country. An interesting development is admirably summarised by Dr. Amin Banani in his *The Modernisation of Iran 1921–1941* where he says: 'The Act also provided preferential treatment in matters of tenure, promotion, and retirement benefits for teachers graduating from these colleges. A new, relatively secure, and respectable professional class, admirably placed for furthering the national goals of the regime, was created, and a corresponding change in social atti-

tudes came about. Thus, for example, young graduate teachers not only drew considerably larger salaries but also enjoyed far greater prestige than the few venerable old-fashioned teachers and tutors of the previous era. Nowhere was this attitude more striking than in the classroom, where the young bow-tied teacher of physics commanded the close attention and respect of the students and often fulfilled their hero-image, while the calligraphy and Arabic classes of famous old craftsmen and scholars were scenes of mayhem and cruel practical jokes played on the teachers.' It was thus that the older generation became confirmed in their dislike and distrust of the new regime and its methods and considered it to have introduced indiscipline and a new type of learning that was only a new and pernicious ignorance.

Dr. Banani also has this to say about the baneful recitative method to which allusion has just been made: 'With the introduction of graduate teachers and modern textbooks, the group recitation-for-memorisation method of the *maktab* was discarded. Reliance upon memorisation, however, continued. With the rapid increase in the number of school children, and growing social pressure to take examinations, a vast proportion of the student body was soon devoting its entire time to memorising the material in the textbooks. Nor was this superficial method of learning limited to students' study habits. An increasing number of teachers in the upper grades relied on the reading aloud of notes and texts in the classroom.' A French kind of syllabus had been adopted, but the French skill at teaching was not so easily transplanted to Iranian soil.

Increasing pressure was brought to bear on the foreign mission schools and on schools run by religious minorities. On 5th September 1928 the Ministry of Education took in hand the regulation of the American Mission Schools and a pattern was established which had to be observed by the other schools. Among the notes exchanged between the British Minister and the Iranian Minister for Foreign Affairs, arising out of the cancelling of capitulations, was one concerning the position of British missionaries and on 10th May, 1928 the Iranian Ministry for Foreign Affairs confirmed that these worthy men and women would be 'permitted to carry out their charitable and educational activities on condition that they did not encroach upon the public order or Iranian laws and regulations'.[1] In the circumstances such safeguards were of no avail in preserving the missionaries' privilege to operate schools. These had started many years before, and American and British hospitals had been opened as early as 1830; the schools were not far behind. The American Presbyterian

[1] *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Vol. XIII compiled by C. U. Aitchison: Government of India, Calcutta, 1933, p. 175.

Alburz School in Tehran and the Church of England Missionary Society's Stewart Memorial College in Isfahan were the two best educational institutions below college and university level in the country. It seems that scarcely anyone except Reza Shah and a few of his more sycophantic henchmen had any desire to see these fine schools changed, but in 1940 they were taken over by the Ministry of Education and became state secondary schools, staffed with Iranian teachers; though a few of the former foreign teachers were allowed to stay on for some years after the blow had fallen. The excuse made at the time was perhaps not entirely without foundation, although a gambit which successive Iranian governments have chosen to justify a variety of actions. It was that if the British and Americans were to be allowed to continue their schools, the Russians would claim the right to run schools as well. A disturbing consequence of the ban on the missionary schools was the increased desire of Iranian parents in the better-off classes to send their children abroad for elementary and secondary education.

Ironically, one of the most promising aspects of Reza Shah's educational reforms was a development that did not take place under the direct aegis of the Ministry of Education. It gave the Germans the opportunity to render Iran really valuable service. Unfortunately it was brought to an end by the outbreak of the War and ultimate occupation of the country by British and Russian forces. Technical Colleges were opened by the various ministries which required the trained personnel they could provide; the Ministries of Industry, Roads and Railways, Mines, War and Agriculture for example. In the case of the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, veterinary and medical colleges were opened with the aid of French professors and were later incorporated into the University of Tehran; the American doctors at the American hospital in Tehran at first helped in the courses at the medical school, but the whole of medical education eventually fell entirely into the French sphere. Only in the last five or six years has there been an effort to interest British teaching doctors in work in Iran. The Ministry of War's military academies were also run on French lines, while officers went to St. Cyr for advanced courses.

The German teachers were instrumental in founding engineering schools, the first being a technical college opened in Tehran in 1922. This was later developed into an Irano-German Industrial School which was not affected by the 1940 regulations concerning foreign schools. German teachers established technical schools in Tabriz, Shiraz and Isfahan under the Iranian Government; a process which was still going on in 1941. These schools did good work and pro-

vided a field of basic technical training which supplemented that of the Apprentice Training Workshops set up by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Abadan and in the oil fields. From 1923 onwards every arrangement of an industrial nature with foreigners included the provision of technical training for Iranians. The Oil Concession, revised in 1933, was no exception. Although the boys trained by the Oil Company were expected to work in the Company, many of them left and opened up workshops of their own or joined garages in various cities, especially in Isfahan whence the majority of them were recruited.

Reza Shah laid the foundation stone of the new University of Tehran on 5th February 1935. At first it was subject to a measure of control by the Ministry of Education, but after Reza Shah's abdication it became an independent body and in recent years has been a centre of political storms which will be mentioned in a later chapter. From the beginning the influence of French educational methods and French training have been noticeable until very recently when a slight change has become perceptible, with the establishment of a Department of Public Administration by the Americans, and in the last few years invitations to British medical experts and scientists to join the staff of Tehran and other Universities.

One of the most important aspects of educational expansion between 1921 and the Second World War was adult education. Whatever criticisms may be made of this educational expansion, three facts have to be borne in mind: the Iranians' respect and eagerness for learning; the Constitutionalists' zeal, on the principle of educating 'our masters', for the spread of education; and Reza Shah's own realisation of its importance. Admittedly he saw it as a means of imposing uniformity on the youth of the nation, and of inculcating in young and old modernist and nationalist ideas. It was the instrument whereby the superstition and backwardness, from which unscrupulous members of the religious classes benefited, could be combated to produce a straight-thinking and integrated modern nation. It was the means of instilling a new outlook and confidence into the Iranian people. Much in this plan to use education as a means to an end deserves praise; and it inevitably resulted in a development which would go far beyond the purposes for which the Shah designed it. The new spirit which he hoped to introduce did affect a number of people. Dr. Banani, describing the W.E.A. type of lectures which Tehran University students organised for Adult Evening Classes in the late nineteen-thirties, speaks of the young students who were 'deeply imbued with the spirit of nationalism and hero-worship' (so that the lecturers were 'an effective means of propaganda and

indoctrination'), at a time when the new education had been in existence for some twelve years.[1] But only a minority was influenced, and that principally in the capital and often the offspring of middle-class homes where the benefits of the new regime had been felt. Nevertheless, the Shah did make it possible for his people to begin their emergence from ignorance and from some of their old-fashioned fantasies. Unfortunately many new fantasies were in the air for an imaginative nation to feed upon. The good was not in proportion to either the effort which was made or to the intense excitement behind it.

This deficient result was not entirely the fault of the Shah or his regime. The promoters of modern education were severely hampered by lack of materials and teachers. Also, their vision and aims varied, and there were conflicting ideals. The democrats' idea of what education was for differed from Reza Shah's, for example. Older men, moreover, could not ignore the fact that the modernists were acting as if there had been no educated men in Iran before 1921. Although numerically limited, there had been some highly educated men. The old system, which was denigrated and ultimately supplanted altogether, had contained elements of great value. When it was abolished those elements were not retained. The new education was imposed too hastily to form part of a gradual evolution and preserve a balance between the old and the new. In place of an education which had produced a few sagacious men nicely adjusted to their society, men of the calibre of Mushiru'd-Daulah and Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh for instance – their courage and principles are not here in question – came a system which produced many superficially educated people, maladjusted and filled with undigested facts which they were incapable of applying in everyday life. Disillusionment and frustration resulted.

The disillusionment was not the product of the Shah's educational efforts alone. Education in the local environment was unavoidably modified by local circumstances and those educated at home, like the Tehran University students just referred to, were not so frustrated as those who went abroad. Very few boys and girls boarded at school. The Alburz and Stewart Memorial Colleges had boarding facilities and the missionaries also set up small boarding houses for girls. Under the Ministry of Education these arrangements were continued, but the majority, whatever they were taught at school, lived in homes where the pattern of life was changing far less rapidly than the educational pattern. This occasioned additional stresses, but nothing like the stresses on those who went abroad, to Belgium,

[1] Banani, op. laud., p. 105.

France and England; later to Germany and, particularly after the war, to the United States. These students returned to perceive that the New Order was only skin-deep and that considerable areas of society had not been penetrated by it at all.

They found that they neither belonged to this society nor were readily accepted by it. The brand of education they had imbibed was part of a different political and economic situation, geared to absorb and utilise the men who had received it. It was based on the requirements of technologically advanced, highly industrialised countries. Its specialist nature was not adjusted to Iranian conditions and not understood by those still in positions of influence in Iran. The doctor, engineer, or dentist admittedly brought back skills whose application was reasonably well understood, as did the teacher, but there were three obstacles in the way of their useful employment. First, Iran was not yet organised to fit them in: the educational process had outstripped administrative, technical and economic development. Secondly, Iran had not been completely without physicians and men who knew something about teeth, or about building a simple stone bridge, before; the assumption had not yet been made that young Iranians could undertake major works which foreigners were imported to do; jealousy combined with distrust of his abilities met the returned student. The entrenched older men neither relished his competition nor the possibility of younger men snatching the influence which had always been the privilege of age. The conflict was unremitting because the older contenders were fighting for survival. They had the advantage of being already in position, and they knew many wiles and had their clients at every strategic point in the Ministries and in the community, so that they could obstruct the younger men at every turn. The returned student had never known, or while abroad had forgotten, the ways of his society; he was deficient in the sign language and idiom his adversaries could signal support with to render him impotent.

His youth, in a society where children were pampered but youths rigorously disciplined to remain standing in the presence of their elders until bidden to sit, to be silent until spoken to, was against him. He had to be taught that the best foreign University training was not enough to overcome the disadvantage of being young. Qavamu's-Saltanah is supposed to have received a visit from a young relative just back from a European education. The anecdote illustrates the friction between the new young men and their seniors. The young man lolled in a chair and alternately stretched out his legs or sat with one leg over the other, adopting the postures of a slightly nervous undergraduate who wants to be at ease. He did not,

of course, smoke; that would have been unthinkable. But his movements were almost equally contrary to correct behaviour, where sitting still with the knees close together and the soles of the feet flat on the floor was the expected pattern. The elder statesman did not sit down but paced the room glancing from time to time at the fidgeting young man until in the end he could contain himself no longer. He rounded on the boy and sarcastically said, 'Sir, one would suppose you had a certain indisposition.'

Thirdly, there was the bland assumption on the part of the authorities that anyone educated abroad could be employed in any capacity, regardless of what his specialisation had been. The first factors, jealously and contempt of the returned student's qualifications, were involved; to make a promising young dentist inspector of . . . anything, provided he received a salary and was on some Civil Service establishment or other, was to remove competition and render him innocuous. Also there was the unpreparedness of the administrative organisation and social stucture to absorb new professional men. The easy solution was to absorb them into the Civil Service, somewhere, somehow, no matter whether there was work for them or not. There was administrative idleness, too: get them on to some establishment and give them a salary, whether duties could be assigned them or not, but at all costs avoid exceeding the minimum of effort and thought. Reza Shah had risen to power partly because so many in high places were too lazy to stop him, a man full of energy. He could not, however, infuse energy into these men although he might scare the wits out of them. Nor could he be everywhere at the same time and himself see to the proper absorption of every student returned from abroad. In spite of his power large areas of administrative detail remained unaltered: beneath a surface show the old stagnation and influences continued to prevail. With little effort made to plan for their integration into the country's life and work, a number of returned students were left to sink into the kind of despair and hatred described by the novelist of the period, Muhammad Mas'ud, in his *Flowers That Grow in Hell.*

This disillusionment can be exaggerated, just as the new confidence achieved through Reza Shah's reforms can be exaggerated. But both the disillusionment of the frustrated student and the proud new nationalism of the fascistic Tehrani youth are discernible. Both were extremes equally disagreeable to older, thoughtful men. Today the disillusioned youths greatly outnumber the proud and boastful ones. While the events of 1941 dashed the hopes of the latter, the frustrations of the former remain. But in judging the New Order, the fact that its formulation was halted before it could take root

must not be ignored: after 1941 there was a brief moment of liberation for the suppressed and the frustrated and novels like the one just mentioned could be published; but a worse despondency and confusion were to follow.

What we are attempting to examine here only involved a small minority. It was the influential and articulate minority, but it cannot answer for the whole people. The inarticulate majority were more easily pleased than the ambitious young man who had seen great educational centres abroad, and compatriots who had only seen the new University of Tehran were, in those days, happier than he. The masses who, from 1937, were catered for by Adult Evening Classes were entranced if they could only learn to write their names and see what the first letters were which spelt out the opening of a poem of Hafiz or a line of the *Shahnamah*, which they had heard and known all their lives but never before read. By June 1938 a total of 124,000 adults had been enrolled (out of a population of about sixteen million) in evening classes. The law required employers to send their workpeople to the classes and, in the government's and the oil industries, to provide amenities for the classes. The response was enthusiastic, but still only among a fraction of the population. The villages were hardly touched: the great majority of cultivators, estimated in 1962 at fifteen million, remained as they had been for hundreds of years, their minds bent on their labours and the skills these demanded; their imaginations crowded with superstition and myths. Thus by the very process it was hoped would impose more uniformity, the dichotomy between the rural majority and urban minority was accentuated.

One of the reformer's difficulties in Iran is the heritage of civilisation with which he must either contend or which he must try and harness to contemporary purposes. Reza Shah was aware of this problem. He spoke of the necessity of adapting ancient craftsmanship to modern needs when he toured technical schools late in his reign; another sign perhaps of a modification in his policies, which his removal prevented being developed. His remarks inspired one of the German technical school instructors to begin the study of Iranian crafts. The Shah also emphasised Iran's past splendour. He had public buildings designed on the lines of Persepolis and encouraged archaeological investigations. The accent was on externals and on the material achievements, the glory and the pomp of great eras of the past. These were held up as examples to a people who suspected these externals and know from experience better than almost any other nation on earth how transient are material achievements and pomp and glory. The New Order pointed to the ruins of Persepolis

as reminders of what Iran had once been and must strive to be again. The Iranian people also see in those ruins a monument to the vanity of human success. Had the New Order been allowed a longer life, it might have defeated this pessimism and destroyed this ancient but, the world being as it is, destructive wisdom. To do this Reza Shah would have had to eradicate most of the qualities which make Iran wiser and more civilised than many other nations. These qualities gone, Iran would have then been reduced to the barbarism requisite for successful competition with the materialistic civilisation of the West, in which her reformers were so anxious to share. The choice was a difficult one. Reza Shah and his supporters made it, although in practice more moderate than their Turkish counterparts under Kamal Ataturk; but some would say that the problem of Persian civilisation was infinitely more complex than that posed by Turkish. The choice once made, there remained the host of people who did not agree with it and a disturbingly schizophrenic situation resulted.

Implicit in Reza Shah's educational reforms was his determination to undermine the influence of the religious classes. Education had been their province until the Constitutional Movement. Secularisation and westernisation went together. The emphasis on sport and quasi-military drilling was the antithesis of the old discipline of the robe. Instead of the boys grouped on the floor round the bearded teacher came the bright-eyed students behind desks in big classrooms overlooking basket-ball pitches. The bastinado was no longer in the school-yard and in place of abasement before subtle masters whose teaching was often designed to show that, whatever was learnt, there was always more to know, great tomes yet to be unlocked, came lessons in man's power to control his physical environment, and the cultivation of strength combined with pride and the belief that Iranians were as good as anybody else, if not superior. This was a necessary counterblast to the humiliations of the past, but laid up fuel for future disillusionment, while raising hopes which could not be realised. It gave a new generation the notion that everything is much easier than in fact it is and this has had a bad effect on planning and development in the post-war years, and resulted in easily damaged morale.

Reza Shah's main point of attack against the religious classes was, however, in the sphere of the law. Attacking them here deprived them of their chief social function and principal source of legitimate revenue. It had not been difficult to win over the mercantile community when there were prospects of greater security, improved communications, industrial expansion, a stronger attitude towards foreign nations and the elimination of foreign competitors within Iran itself. It had not been difficult to control the aristocracy. Many

of the old élite were only too anxious to win the new regime's approval, thus rescuing some of their former wealth and privilege. The tribes had been cowed by the army's strength and ubiquity, and were kept subdued by roads constructed for the rapid passage of troops and artillery into the heart of their mountain fastnesses.

The leaders of the Bakhtiari tribes were forced to reside in Tehran with other tribal hostages. Some died in prison, a warning to others. The Lurs had made a gallant stand at the gates of their grim stronghold of Khurramabad, but had been disastrously defeated, then disarmed. The road from Tehran, through Qazvin and Hamadan, Burujird and Malayir, was widened and paved and passed through the mountain walls to go beneath Khurramabad's dismantled fortress and on down the valleys to the Khuzistan Plain and Persian Gulf. The tar, melted by the summer sun and cracked by the winter frosts, shone on high and low ground where the highway opened up country which strangers had once entered at their peril. Bandits were hunted down, and, below Khurramabad, the columns in which two were cemented up may still be seen.

Thus brigandage, one form of livelihood for the tribes, especially in a bad year or when flocks fell to disease, was removed from all but the most distant areas. Efforts to settle the tribes followed. Seasonal migrations were prevented, mud or stone huts being built to take the place of tents. In these settlements the tribes were constrained to stay on the dung-hills which in their former marches they had left behind, while sickness bred by their squalor had been checked by their wild, mobile existence under the open sky. During 1932 bills were passed for the transfer of state lands to tribesmen who had been in the habit of supposing that whatever they could fight for and whatever was in sight was theirs. Free seed was distributed and funds set aside to aid them in adopting an agrarian way of life. But the agents of the Government with whom these startled and bewildered men and women of the great spaces and upland pastures had to deal were the army and new gendarmerie. These agents bullied and threatened. Horrible tales are told of officers who amused themselves in the unfamiliar wastes by decapitating Kurdish and Lur heads. Money voted for the tribes was embezzled and land allocated free by the Tehran authorities forcibly sold to the wretched people.

For the tribes it was the beginning of the end. Their Khans taken away from them, they were leaderless. In August 1941, when the Khans returned, terrible revenge was exacted on government troops and the filthy settlements were at once destroyed and abandoned. But this ancient portion of Iran's rural population, which according to recent figures numbered some two million or only eighteen per

cent of the total, yet which had once made Emperors and might have done so again as late as 1911, had in fact been broken. Today the problem is how to preserve what is left of the grazing industry with pastoralism threatened with extinction; and how to study tribal life where there is some left to study. In 1963 the Boir Ahmadi[1] were bombed from the air and a final liquidation seemed to have begun.

Between 1925 and 1941 it in fact became evident that the tribes could be defeated and, given time, eliminated altogether; as it was, even their short taste of enforced settlement reduced them considerably by death from disease. It was also evident that the merchants' and nobles' self-interest would silence opposition from these two classes, but the mullas remained, with powers less tangible and society permeated by the fibres of their influence. Their function as interpreters of the law meant that they had to validate the most vital acts of man; marriage, divorce, testimonies, deeds of trust and possession, transfers of property, commercial contracts. As we have seen, two systems of law had been admitted, the *Shari'a*, a system of canon law which had jurisdiction in matters of personal status, and *'Urf*, a customary law of a more secular order, which was supposed to operate in cases involving the state. Owing to the instability of the state in recent years, however, the *Shari'a* had acquired nearly all legal authority and the development of *'Urf* been arrested. This left juridical authority almost entirely tied to the religious authorities and made the isolation and defeat of their power extremely difficult. Their opponent had first to build up a substitute system of law before he could progress towards disestablishing the religious body. This is what Reza Shah proceeded to do, while it was intended that secular education and nationalist propaganda, in which pre-Islamic Iran was the model, would weaken the people's religious loyalty to the institution they had also been bound to resort to for their law. To weaken and destroy this religious emotion would have taken far longer than the New Order was given. The attempt encountered the hostile sentiments to which allusion has already been made: the Achaemenid tyranny was remote, the liberation effected by Islam historically much nearer. A profound knowledge of the details of history was not necessary for the question to pose itself: Had the plight of the masses under the Sasanids been justified by the splendours which had crumbled so ignominiously before the ragged Arab soldiers of Islam in the eighth century?

Nevertheless, the programme went on: in 1935 millenary celebrations for the great poet, Firdausi, whose epic, the *Shahnamah*, enshrines the pre-Islamic Iranian legend, were impressively staged and

[1] One of the more intractable southern tribes.

a new tomb built for the poet at Tus, his birthplace. The Antiquities Act of 1930 cancelled the monopoly which the French had enjoyed in archaeological excavation, which was brought under government control. A German archaeological expedition began work at Persepolis and one from Chicago at Rayy. Of the 247 buildings which had been scheduled by the end of 1932 as historical monuments, 82 were pre-Islamic. A College of Music was opened and, besides encouraging modern composers, undertook the collection of folk music. An Opera House was begun in Tehran – there was an Opera House, completed, in Baghdad, and in Ankara; Reza Shah would also be motivated by the desire to keep up with his neighbours – but the war prevented its completion and the large brick shell was pulled down in 1956. As Elwell-Sutton said of these New Order efforts: 'There is a significant change of outlook here; orthodox Islam banned the use of music, and although this no longer holds in any but the more primitive Muslim countries, and the gramophone is ubiquitous, yet it is only rarely that official interest and patronage have been given. The attitude of the Iranian Government is that music can be an instrument both of propaganda and of popular education.'[1]

All this had, of course, little effect on the masses. The Firdausi celebrations were of great interest to a handful of foreign scholars. They got free trips to Iran where they read learned papers. The Russian Orientalists took full advantage of the occasion and soon began celebrating the anniversaries of Persian poets who had been born in countries which now form part of the U.S.S.R. Iranian scholars were given the chance to compete with foreign students of their culture, whose weapons a new class of scholar in Persia now wielded. The old anthologising and composition of *Memorials of the Poets*, which had been one of the main Persian contributions to literary history and criticism, in which fiction and fact had been casually but gracefully blended, now gave way to systematic research and textual criticism.

This also bore no relation to the people's attitude towards their great literature, to the recitations of which the illiterate peasant continued to thrill with a joy unalloyed by scholarly considerations and borne up by an instinctive understanding of the poets' message. The scholars sometimes missed this message, but, if they were Iranian, they understood it very well. However, as it was hardly consonant with the tenor of the New Order, learned disquisitions by Iranian professors, on the exact date of a poet's birth and death, or on the relative value of different manuscripts of his works, were safer than frank

[1] L. P. Elwell-Sutton, *Modern Iran*, London, 1941, p. 153.

appraisal of the poets' attitude towards the patrons they praised or towards the vanity of the world. Thus Iranian scholars in their western dress might quite deliberately emulate western colleagues and consciously abrogate their own sad and moving awareness of the criticism of life which a Firdausi's or a Hafiz's poems contain. In this way they avoided the risk of giving offence to the regime and at the same time assisted in the process of cultural window-dressing. This is not to impugn the soundness of their endeavours: what foreigners did they could do equally plausibly, but at the expense of reducing the area of their comprehension to fit it into the limits imposed by the foreigners' approach to Persian literature, and by the exigencies of the time.

Those who have recently made a study of it say that during the nineteenth century the jurisprudence of the canonical schools as represented in Shi'ite Persia was strengthened by revisions of theory and the re-editing and reglossing of legal texts; and indeed great volumes were produced in continuation of the process begun under the Safavid Shahs in the sixteenth century, when the foundations of the Iranian Shi'ite legal and state structure were laid. But in the early twentieth century the Constitutional Movement included the threat of laicisation, posed by those revolutionaries who wanted not only to equal the West but also to imitate it. The impact of this threat was cushioned by the leading part clerics themselves played in the Movement, and the clauses in the Fundamental Law designed to preserve religious authority in matters of law have been noticed; in theory the Constitution could not shelter legal changes unsanctioned by the '*Ulama*, religious jurisprudents.

Practice, however, depended upon the power of the clergy to see that the theory was applied. The clergy's political power declined in the first years of this century so that, in spite of courting the mullas as a possible counterweight to other potential sources of opposition, and in spite of the perhaps slightly 'rigged' set-back over the proposed Republic (for in those days Reza Khan was intriguing on a very complex scale), by 1928 Reza Shah could treat them surprisingly brusquely. Early in that year the Queen, his Consort and mother of the Crown Prince, inadvertently let her veil slip to show part of her face during a ceremony in the Shrine Mosque at Qum. The officiating preacher denounced her for it. The Shah was in the Qum the next day with two armoured cars and a party of troops on call. He entered the mosque without taking his boots off and thrashed the mulla. He also ordered the arrest and removal of three criminals who, in accordance with ancient procedure, had taken sanctuary in the mosque precincts.

1928 was the year of the attack on the outworks of the religious legal fabric. After 1906 efforts had been made to introduce a new Civil Code and in 1910 an Attorney-General had been appointed. In 1911 Mushiru'd-Daulah's government established a new Ministry of Justice and a Code was published, declared to be experimental and conceived with cautious regard for Article 2 of the Fundamental Law, whereby no legislation contrary to the *Shari'a* was to be enacted. A Commercial Code had appeared in 1915, but by then lack of trained secular lawyers had already dictated a pause in these legal reforms. They were not resumed until 1928.

The system of capitulations, justified on the plea that the subjects of Christian Powers could not be exposed to a foreign legal system which was also part of another religious system, were a lingering memorial to former foreign influence and an affront to Iranian nationhood. Reza Shah was anxious to abolish them and the speed with which he began legal reform was not therefore aimed solely at the mullas, but was also the prelude to throwing off other nations' extra-territorial rights. Between 1924 and 1926 experimental commercial and penal codes were introduced. In 1927 a big step forward was the taking over of the Ministry of Justice by European-trained lawyers in place of clerics. On this occasion Reza Shah reminded the new officials that a country was judged by the quality of its laws. The young man who became Minister of Justice straight away addressed himself to the preparation of a new Civil Code. His name was Davar and he was typical of the new type of professional man whose presence made it possible for the Shah to dispense with older men, of aristocratic or clerical origin; men like Teymurtash, for instance. Davar was from the lower middle class. He had been trained in Geneva. He owed his position to the opportunities afforded by the new regime and so he was likely to be loyal to it. He was, moreover, able, industrious and of unimpeachable honesty.

On 8th May 1928, he presented the first volume of the new Civil Code to the Majlis. As it was known that the passage of this would enable the Shah to cancel the remaining capitulation concessions, the new Articles were almost at once accepted. Articles dealing with general matters were in many instances translated directly from their French models. In principle, matters of civil status were a recodification of the *Shari'a* provisions for similar instances. Capitulations were now abolished. In December of the same year a sumptuary Act implied a further attack on religion. Uniform attire on European lines was prescribed for men, a peaked cap replacing the brimless hat worn by Muslims so that their foreheads can touch the ground in prayer. During the next two years, a number of other law

enactments were made for a trial period with a view to revision and improvement after their effects in practice had been ascertained. In 1929 the eighth Majlis received the two final volumes of the new Civil Code. However, capitulations no longer being a thorn in the Shah's flesh and the lesson of King Amanu'llah of Afghanistan's fate, after overrapid modernisation, not being lost on him, the Assembly was on this occasion allowed ample time to make up its mind; the rest of the Code was not finally approved until January and October 1935. In 1931, however, special regulations to deal with political and press offences were precipitated by the fear of Communist activities and made legal history because, for the first time in Iran, they provided for trial by jury. Besides illustrating the vigilance of the Iranians over matters affecting personal freedom, the provision of this mechanism, which was in fact seldom invoked, flew in the face of former religious practice, which worked on the principle of sworn witnesses to an alleged crime or act, the final decision resting with the judge interpreting the law.

Another part of the clerical outworks was demolished in September 1924 when the legal age of majority was declared to be eighteen, Quranic ruling in this case being ignored and modified; and human dissection was permitted in the Tehran Medical College. On 6th June 1935 the Shah uncovered his head on entering the Baharistan building for the state opening of the Majlis, thereby flouting the religiously sanctioned compulsory practice of keeping the head covered on formal occasions. Indeed, in 1935 legal reform was renewed with fresh impetus. More clearly defined, and more clearly secular, regulations on marriage were promulgated and already the Shari'a authorities had been subjected to the humiliation of a rule insisting that marriages and divorces arranged by mullas should also be registered by a civil notary. By the law of 14th August 1931 women had been permitted in special circumstances to initiate divorce proceedings; and foreigners had been allowed to enter certain mosques which were to be henceforth regarded, not so much as religious buildings, as architectural and historical monuments. The mosques in shrine cities like Qum and Meshed have remained closed to members of alien faiths but generally all others are open, although at first visitors had to be accompanied by a military escort. Isfahan was the city primarily concerned in this reform, which was one of a long series of blows aimed to quell the turbulent clerics there. In 1928 the Government had taken the first steps to prevent public flagellation in the month of Muharram, the Month of Mourning, and the practice of inviting the envoys of Muslim countries to the plays acted during Muharram, to depict the sufferings of the mar-

tyred Husain and his family, was discontinued. The plays themselves, the Taziyahs, were discouraged and thus in the big cities a usual feature of the calendar began rapidly to disappear.

In 1935 European headgear for men was decreed and in the provincial bazaars hatters borrowed Englishmen's trilby hats to serve as models for their own hastily fashioned masterpieces, some of which were hammered out in tin and painted to look like the real thing. It was thus that in details the decrees of the New Order were obeyed with timorous dispatch while in major matters many of them were abused and loopholes found for the commission of acts exploiting the people. It was estimated that during 1935 some four thousand women in Tehran, out of a total population of 300,000 males and females, were leaving off the veil. In autumn 1934 an official pronouncement had prepared the public for unveiled women teachers in schools. In May 1935 a Womens' Cultural Centre with one of the Shah's daughters as its patron was founded and there was a parade of schoolgirls in gym-slips. On 28th June the Prime Minister gave an historic tea-party at a prominent Club in the capital and members of the Cabinet and high officials were bidden to arrive accompanied by their wives. Not surprisingly, in spite of the pause during the years immediately following the rising against Amanu'llah in Afghanistan, the reforms in matters of dress led to a rebellion in the shrine-city of Meshed, where troops armed with machine-guns and rifles had to violate the precincts of the shrine before order was restored. In the meantime, public appearances of ladies of high position and the abandonment by younger men of old-fashioned articles of dress continued undeterred. The men had little alternative because dress laws were strictly enforced with the result that much that had been beautiful in clothing was replaced by peculiarities of attire it took the innate good taste and love of smartness of Iranians some years to eliminate; while the poorer classes have continued to wear shirts without collars, and to show a disregard for daily shaving which makes the loss of the traditional Muslim beard regrettable.

By 1936 the mullas had been sufficiently humbled for final steps to be taken. Many of them had already abandoned the turban and donned a western-style suit to become notaries in order to avoid destitution, for by a law of 17th March 1932 the negotiation of documents relating to property transactions and other matters was to be dealt with exclusively by state secular courts and lawyers. New regulations of this kind made it impossible for many clerics to gain a living unless they too became secular. The final secularisation of the judiciary was passed by the Majlis on 27th December 1936. Henceforth judges had to have a degree from the Tehran Faculty of Law

or a foreign university and to have completed three or more years' legal training. Former judges who did not have these qualifications had to pass special examinations to remain in the Ministry of Justice's employment, and in any event they were debarred from rising beyond the sixth grade in the promotion scale of eleven ranks.

Accordingly by the end of 1936, Iran was legally almost entirely emancipated from religion. On 8th January of that year the Shah had appeared at the Tehran High School with the Queen and his two elder daughters unveiled and in European dress. From thenceforward the veil had been forbidden: shops were not allowed to serve veiled women customers and ladies wearing the veil were not allowed to walk in the streets or to use public transport. Some old ladies never went out again until after 1941; they were unable to face the ordeal these new regulations imposed upon them. After 1941 a surprising number rushed to resume the veil and it quickly again became a common sight, particularly among the poorer classes. Poverty rather than prejudice made women take to wearing it again: the long, black veil hides shabby clothes and down-at-heel footwear. After the veil had been forbidden a sum of £25,000 was set aside to assist poorer women to buy clothes, but this was only the barest recognition of the hardship many were bound to suffer. Modernisation has not diminished the poverty of the Iranian majority and Reza Khan's abdication gave the poor the chance again to put on the clothes associated with, and most convenient to, their normal situation. It is only the better-off who have been able to take the most advantage of the emancipating reforms so far as they affect women.

In 1940 women were unequal to men in theory in only five respects: a man could have more than one wife if he could prove himself rich enough to keep more than one establishment and to give to each wife equal status and comforts. A woman, on the other hand, could have only one husband at a time. A man could divorce his wife when he wished, but a woman had to have special reasons for suing for divorce. A woman's inheritance rights were less than a man's, although modern reforms had reaffirmed her dowry claims on her husband and she had control of her own property. The man is legally head of the family and entitled to custody of the children. The woman might not vote nor stand as a candidate in elections.

The fifth inequality went when in 1962 women were promised that in revised electoral laws they would have the vote and, in January 1963, they were allowed a token vote in the National Referendum on the Shah's reforms. By 1964 there were women Senators and Majlis Deputies, and in the wealthy and the urban middle classes, which nowadays extend down to a low level in the social and economic

scale, the women are not concealed and are not characterised by any greater restrictions than until recently they were in any other country. But it is questionable to what extent this is due to the New Order and how far it is the continuance of an older state of affairs now brought to light because of the removal of superficial restraints like the veil and necessity of keeping within the womens' quarters in the home. Women, although veiled and hidden from all males but close relatives, have always had considerable influence in both domestic and state affairs, and were free to move about a great deal, visiting the bazaar and going on complicated rounds of visits to the houses of female friends. They generally went on journeys to religious centres, as far afield as Meshed in Khurasan and Najaf and the other venerated cities in Iraq. These journeys were undertaken by women of the poorer classes as well as the rich and necessitated more travel than many English women ever experienced until very recent times. The veil was constricting but it had its uses. It conferred an anonimity which was sometimes desirable, and it concealed not only beauty but ugliness as well. Much power was exercised from behind lattices and the female apartments. But the veil was not a congenial feature on the sky-line of a nation striving to look modern. For this and for many other reasons the New Order had to abolish it. Whether it deserved the high place it has had in the priorities of nations like modern Iran and modern Turkey is another matter; perhaps their rulers saw more than one advantage in bringing the women out into the open. As for poor women, the scouring of pots and pans and planting, cropping and gleaning the fields have to be done by somebody, whether the Government decrees that they should have a shawl over their heads and shoulders and hide their faces from strangers or not.

Women's education has not kept pace with the men's and therefore, broadly speaking, there is a tendency for their heads to be no better or worse employed than they were when veiled. In some instances, however, the women behave as if they had lost some of their former wisdom; those in high positions have often ceased to be the moderators of their influential husbands and become money-conscious hoydens – Paris fashions are expensive and, as in days gone by, jewels are always sought, largely as an investment. (Iranian reticence over wealth has in recent years given way to the ostentatious display of shining new motor-cars, although not so much of jewellery, to which more old-fashioned associations still cling. The race to be first with the latest American car models indicates how much higher classes have become impregnated with the folly of wanting to keep up with or surpass neighbours in signs of affluence.) In post-war years, divorce has increased in upper and professional

classes but is still just shameful enough to be used as a threat by discontented or capricious wives if they do not get all that they want. As they approach equality with their menfolk, their power to make demands increases and husbands might incur debts or become more venal than they would otherwise be to meet these demands. It is interesting that in the last three years one distinguished lady has been sentenced to imprisonment for corruption in connection with a government monopoly while, in the summer of 1963, press reports stated that the wife of a recent prime minister was to be indicted on charges of corruption during her husband's term of office. Immediately after his resignation in 1962 rumours circulated in Tehran about his wife's methods of cashing in on the restrictions her husband, generally believed to be perfectly honest and above corruption, had imposed to avert an economic crisis, especially in foreign exchange transactions. Part of the evil in cases of this kind lies in the love of gambling, to which, in the upper reaches of society, women are as much addicted as men.

On the other hand, women freed by Reza Shah began at once to take an active and praiseworthy part in good works, following the lead given by the ladies of his own family. Many Iranian girls have become nurses. Modern hospital development still has a long way to go, but the new hospitals that have been opened could not be as humane and efficient as they are without the devoted and precise female workers who run them. They bring to the country the best professional skill they have acquired in the great hospitals of England and America. Comment on the problems of Iranian students abroad will be reserved for a later chapter, but here it must be said that the nurses are among the most successful. Women have made possible the building up of the Red Lion and Sun Society, Iran's equivalent of the Red Cross and a body which the New Order did much to foster; women teachers have proved excellent counterparts to men in the modern schools and have displayed as teachers the intelligence, wisdom and insight of which the ordinary Iranian woman is capable. In the past few years women doctors and trained midwives have appeared as harbingers of the important ameliorative effect on Iranian society which increased responsibility accorded to women, and an increased sense of it in them, will undoubtedly extend. So that perhaps votes for women and the presence of women in the National Assembly will do more than anything else to produce a balanced and happier nation. The corrupt, headstrong ladies referred to in the preceding paragraph are, after all, only a small minority and it would be unjust to judge the women of Iran by their conduct alone; although, as small minorities tend to in Iran, they have an influence

disproportionate to their numbers. Nevertheless it would be particularly unjust, because Iranian women are often beautiful, and generally tolerant and kind. They have suffered much, not necessarily only on account of those constraints which religion formerly sanctioned, but also because of the weakness, vanity and irresponsibility of the men. They deserve a wide measure of forgiveness if, on stepping into the limelights of the modern world, they falter. But in the last assessment they have not much to be forgiven for and from 1930 until 1963 they had thirty-three years in which to prepare themselves for the more ample social and political roles they are now being offered, and of which Reza Shah's reforms were only the beginning.

With regard to marriage, although marriages are still generally arranged by intermediaries acting on behalf of the two families who propose to contract an alliance, under the new Civil Code the agreement of the prospective bride and groom was required as a condition of the match. The exercise of complete freedom of choice is only gradually becoming accepted, and only in the urban upper classes and educated groups. Marriages based solely on love and between strangers are still a rarity; the group nature of Persian society, in which marriages are between a boy and girl belonging to two families which are of the same stratum of society and known to each other or having friends in common, and in a position to assess each other's resources, standing and character, still persists in some strength. The difficulties in the way of boys and girls getting married without intricate preliminaries and considerable expense gives rise to tensions among the young which may have more connection with youthful political bitterness and outbursts against the regime than is apparent at first sight. As for the expense and ostentatious consumption of Iranian marriages and funerals, one of Reza Shah's reforms was aimed at their reduction; funeral ceremonies were curtailed and the serving of tea, coffee and tobacco in mosques to mourners forbidden, the days of visiting following a death being reduced to one.

Students going abroad return with modified notions on marriage, and sometimes with wives from the country where they have been studying. This was less common in the time of Reza Shah, when, according to Elwell-Sutton, students coming back from education abroad were in great demand as husbands for the daughters of high-class families; they would, no doubt, be regarded by fathers as in the van of the new developments and likely to rise to positions of influence; and marrying them to their daughters would also be a means of 'capturing' them. The practice of bringing foreign wives has increased slightly since facilities in Iranian towns have become more up-to-date and the old system of family life weakened. During the

reign of Reza Shah marriage between Iranian males and foreign girls was inhibited by the remaining tradition of the close-knit family; the girl still, to a great extent, had to become a member of the closed circle of women. Olive Suratgar in her excellent book, *I Sing in the Wilderness*, gives a detailed account of the somewhat harrowing ordeal faced by a foreign girl being introduced into the old-fashioned Persian family. The Civil Code's Article 1060 precludes Iranian women from marrying foreign males without special permission. This goes back to the religious rule that, while a Muslim male may marry a woman of another faith who thereupon becomes a Muslim, the female may not marry outside the Faith. Unless her husband undertook first to become Muslim, she would be committing apostasy. But it also goes back to Reza Shah's anxiety not to facilitate alliances between Iranian individuals and foreigners; under the New Order restrictions against any form of social intercourse with foreigners steadily increased until it was almost impossible for members of the foreign community to mix with Iranians, although the once exclusively British Club in Tehran was compelled to open its doors to Iranian members. They were, however, carefully selected by the authorities.

Article 1035 of the new Code allowed an engagement to be broken even after *mihr*, the prenuptial sum deposited by the groom for the bride, had been paid. This was a break with Shari'a practice as the handing over of *mihr* was considered the first act of the contract which marriage was finally to seal. The new Code stated that daughters required paternal permission to marry, but this was not necessary for sons; and the old custom of more than one wife, the total not to exceed four, was allowed. Temporary wives, a Shi'ite legal phenomenon, were also permitted, but with revised registration requirements. None the less, it thus remained possible for a man to marry a woman for as short a time as twenty-four hours, a practice which in any event is widely deplored. It is a notorious adjunct of life in the shrines visited by pilgrims and is considered a somewhat scandalous feature of life among the religious classes; but, as the law stands, is still quite legal.

A new Penal Code was provisionally promulgated in 1926 and improved on the Shari'a by providing more specifically for special treatment of the insane. The twelfth Majlis finally approved the new Penal Code in 1940, following extensive revisions which resulted in a document chiefly based on the model of fascist Italy. Between 1937 and 1939 regulations governing the professional conduct of lawyers and solicitors were put on the Statute Book. From 1907 efforts had been made to establish a hierarchy of courts and the organisation

which was ultimately evolved followed the French pattern. There are four types of court, the first two, courts of the first instance and the second, appellate courts. The Supreme Court may, however, function as a court of the first instance for the trial of Cabinet Ministers. The system allows for specialised courts to try penal offences and civil service and military offences. The lowest court, the Bakhsh Court, is a summary court and restricted to cases not involving over 20,000 rials in money or sentences of more than two months' imprisonment or fines of over twelve hundred rials. Next is the Shahristan Court, which may be termed the 'County' Court; then the Ustan Court, the Provincial Court of Appeal, and finally the Divan-i-Kishvar or Supreme Court sitting in the capital.

New regulations for the Civil Service made entrance conditional on a competitive examination and established promotion in nine grades. In more recent years, entrance has been closed altogether to the established grades, but neither this later measure nor the competitive entrance have prevented expansion. Typical of the Iranian capacity for compromise and circumvention of regulations was the system devised, and subsequently much abused, of granting temporary Civil Service appointments under contract to specialists; an arrangement which could be justified by the needs resulting from technical reforms. Most post-war attempts to reduce the Civil Service have made these temporary appointments bear the brunt of the attack, but then there were also the specialist agencies, such as the Plan Organisation and Rural Development Board, which could, and have had to, absorb large numbers of technically qualified men. *Partibazi* is of great importance in arranging to obtain appointments in these agencies, also in the Foreign Service. It is the system through which a distinguished relative, or a relative's distinguished friend, or a relation by marriage, or some other person upon whom a claim of affinity can be made, perhaps arising from some very old family dependency or clientage, can be induced to bring pressure to bear on the organisation in which employment is being sought. Doors are opened to the young man who can show the signed visiting card of a man of note; but of course more useful is a letter to someone high in the organisation's hierarchy; and especially to someone on one of the Government Higher Councils formed to keep an eye on the agencies – and to provide jobs for ex-Ministers and retired Ambassadors, etc.

In 1938 the old provincial boundaries were changed and the country divided into thirteen Ustans or Provinces, each under an Ustandar, Governor General. These Ustans are subdivided into a total of forty-nine Shahristans all over the country, each under a

Governor. The final subdivision is the Bakhsh, an Urban District, and the Dihistan, a Rural District. From the Ustandar to the Bakhshdar all appointments are made by the Ministry of the Interior which through these officials is also in charge of Majlis elections. Parallel with these civil officials are the military and gendarmerie commands under the General Staff and the Shah as Commander-in-Chief. An army officer represents the government in the tribes, and Bakhshdars in areas traversed by migration routes also report on tribal activities to the Central Government, which sometimes sends out special inspectors from the Ministry of the Interior.

This Ministry is a most sensitive department of the government. Besides being responsible for the organisation of elections, through officials of its choice and on its establishment it controls the whole country. The more senior officials are naturally the most carefully selected, the Shah concerning himself over their selection. Of late years the tendency for the Minister of the Interior to be a special intimate of the Throne has been most marked. His deputy may at a moment's notice be sent to act as Governor General, in a province which shows signs of restlessness. The Tehran-centred selection of officials of all grades, and of the army, gendarmerie and senior police officers in the provinces, ensures effective centralisation. Under the New Order, imposing buildings for the provincial administration and army commands were constructed and each provincial city had its Officers' Club, the grandest of all being in Tehran, a large and splendidly furnished building whose carpets are museum-pieces. These clubs were intended to be the frames in which the new military aristocracy could display itself, and to which flattered civilians could be invited to share the luxuries provided for army officers. They went with the wide, tree-lined streets Reza Shah ordered to be driven through every town, down to the smallest, and called Khiaban-i-Pahlavi, Pahlavi Avenue; and generally ending in a neat little public park, called the Bagh-i-Milli, National Garden, or Park-i-Milli, National Park, with the parterres of flowers Persians love and a bandstand for evening performances of military music.

The avenues were in startling contrast to the old jumble of twisting alleys which composed the Persian town. Among the signs which it was believed would proclaim the manifestation on earth of the Hidden Emam was the sudden straightening of the crooked streets and when Nasiru'd-Din Shah, on returning from Europe, wanted to make a boulevard in Tehran, a fanatical mob stopped the work because they claimed that wide straight streets would deprive them of one of the signs of the Coming. Reza Shah brooked no nonsense of this sort: he would take the map of a town and draw two parallel

pencil lines across it where the new avenue was to be. Local officials were left to see that the new street was made before he visited the place, and the fear of his anger was such that trees were brought and stuck in the ground the night before he arrived so that the avenue looked as he had ordered that it should. Even so, he once counted the trees and, finding one short, severely chastised the official responsible. His sense of humour, however, prevented him from going to the extent of pulling up one of the rootless saplings that was being watered to remain green until his visit ended. These Pahlavi Avenues set the style for subsequent urban development.

Another feature of the New Order was an elaborate system of registration. Everyone had to have an identity book. In connection with the application of the new Military Service Act, these identity books had to be shown on entering and leaving a town or district, on registering at hotels, travelling by train and obtaining employment. Foreigners had to have Residence Permits, as they still do, granted by the Police; and Work Permits, granted by the Ministry of Labour, if they remain in the country longer than a fortnight and undertake gainful work. Regulations were also enforced for the obtaining by Iranian citizens of passports to leave the country, and in this procedure a fruitful source of worry for applicants and extra money for underpaid officials was developed.

In times of stress, other registration measures are applied and special permits needed to visit certain frontier or tribal areas. These permits are issued by the Second Bureau of the General Staff and as a rule applicants used to be interviewed by the issuing officer. Similarly for residence permits and passports visits have to be made to the relevant offices, although many people employ special messengers, men with expert knowledge of the *Idarat*, Government Bureaux, to do some of the running about for them. Once when it was desired to humiliate and vex Qavamu's-Saltanah, one of the pin-pricks his enemies devised against him was to insist that he should go in person for his passport, an unheard of step for such an old and distinguished man. In the end the stipulation was waived and his secretary got the passport (but an ordinary one, not, as was customary for a former Minister and important person of the State, a diplomatic passport) in the usual way. The formalities depend to a large extent on the internal state of the country and on the state of foreign relations. Policy fluctuates and foreign visitors should go armed with plenty of passport photographs, for it is hard to estimate how many might be needed for permits of one kind or another.

The New Order was prolific in permits and licences; licences for bicycles, for example, to obtain which a test had to be passed in

bicycle riding; and, from 1926, for motor vehicles, for which driving tests were in operation long before they were in England. Traffic laws are rigorous on paper but in application apt to fall the most heavily on foreigners, because they have no *partibazi* to fall back upon to get them out of difficulties with the police. It is the general habit to blame the foreigner for damage, the other parties to the accident seeking to disown responsibility. There is no malice in this – and it is not a custom confined to Iran – it is simply due to the policeman supposing that if he charges the alien there will be less likelihood of involvement with influential people who could get him into trouble; and the Iranian culprit supposing that a powerful and rich foreigner will be better able ultimately to cope with the authorities than he can. He is probably right.

The greatest single innovation of Reza Shah's reign was the one in which he probably delighted the most and which showed him at his most amiable and most irritable; it was the Trans-Iranian Railway. In 1921 the only lines were a seventy-five-mile broad-gauge line from Julfa in Soviet Azerbaijan to Tabriz, capital of Persian Azerbaijan, with a twenty-five mile extension to Lake Urumiah or, as it is now called, Lake Reza'iyeh; fifty-two miles of standard-gauge railway which linked the Indian Northwestern Railway to Zahidan, formerly Duzdab, in Persian Baluchistan; and narrow-gauge mineral railway tracks, from Tehran to Shah Abdul Azim, five and a half miles, Rasht to Pir-i-Bazaar, seven miles and the Oil Company's line, from the River Karun at Dar-i-Khazinah through the Zagros foothills to Masjid-i-Sulaiman; this line was taken up in 1949–50. The Tehran–Shah Abdul Azim line was the oldest: it was a sample given as a gift to Nasiru'd-Din Shah by a Belgian concern which was angling for a major railway concession. Earlier novelties in the way of traction had also included a tramway in Tehran.

The line from India to Zahidan, a relic of the First World War, was discontinued, but not removed, in 1931: it punctured the Iranian border and therefore excited Reza Shah's suspicions. It came into operation again during the Second World War and, certainly until 1958, one train a week still ran, providing great scope for dealers in contraband. It will be looked at again in connection with plans under the Central Treaty Organisation, aimed at producing the same link-up of territories which was part of Curzon's vision behind the Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1919, when it was hoped to make a bridge across Turkey and Iran to India.

In Chapter XI reference was made to Russian, British and French schemes for a Persian railway system, and to dreams of an Iran interlaced with miles of economically advantageous and strategically

well-cited permanent way, such as were the preoccupation of Lord Curzon, who, in his youth, had strenuously travelled about Persia on horse-back. The dreams included a diagonally orientated railway across Iran to link the Russian and Indian systems. As in dreams is wont to happen, certain details occasioned by fear and suspicion were accentuated. The military correspondent of *The Times* wrote about the danger to India of such a railway link with Russia, so that a project was put forward for having an alignment in southeast Iran, through the Makran region, close enough to the sea to be commanded by the guns of British warships. A railway through the strangely contorted valleys of the Makran would have been a feat indeed, whether in range of battleships or not.

Due partly to the consummate inertia of Nasiru'l-Mulk, partly to the outbreak of the 1914–18 War, none of these grandiose ideas ever went beyond the conference table and newspaper discussion. Reza Shah planned his railway on an axis designed to thwart as far as possible any advantages the foreign powers might have hoped to derive from it. It was standard gauge as opposed to the broad gauge of the U.S.S.R. and narrow gauge of the Iraq railway system, to which British thinkers on the subject had suggested an Iranian railway might be joined at either Basra or Khanaqin, on the Iraq-Iran frontier. To keep the southern railhead as far away as possible from British-dominated Iraq, a new port called Bandar Shapur, on the channel into the Persian Gulf called the Khor Musa, was created. Khurramshahr, the existing port, was not directly on the Gulf but separated from it by Abadan Island and some miles of inland water, and was near Basra, while its waters were the subject of dispute with Iraq. It, however, continued to be the port preferred by foreign shippers, and the Allies in the Second World War constructed a line from Ahwaz to join the Trans-Iranian Railway to this obvious terminal.

To avoid easy Russian penetration the new line was not taken to the Caspian Port of Enzeli, now called Bandar Pahlavi, but again a new port was created, called Bandar Shah. This port was built near the southeast corner of the Caspian. It has fared less well than Bandar Shapur; silting has made it practically unusable and Bandar Pahlavi remains the principal port on the southern Caspian coast. But making the railway run through the eastern half of the Caspian littoral left out the province of Gilan and served the province of Mazandaran, where Reza Shah originated, where he had acquired large estates and where he established cotton-spinning and silk factories.

The British had surveyed a line from Ahwaz in Khuzistan to

Khurramabad and some use was made of the data thus available. Khurramabad was, however, already served by a trunk road and was left out of the planned railway. The railway passed through extremely difficult mountainous country to the east of this town and in so doing reached a height of over seven thousand feet above sea-level. It missed Burujird and Hamadan and instead went through the unimportant town of Durud to Sultanabad, whose new name was Arak, a carpet-weaving centre. As will have been gathered, under the new regime place-names were in several instances changed, either to new ones or back to much more ancient names, as in the case of the name Khuzistan being revived for the province which had become known as Arabistan. From Sultanabad or Arak the line descended to Qum and Tehran, six hundred and seven miles by rail from the Persian Gulf. From Tehran it proceeded another two hundred and eighty-five miles to Bandar Shah on the Caspian Sea.

With one section of 127 tunnels in a length of one and a half miles on the southern portion, and, on the northern, a section with 85 tunnels and 106 bridges where, in a distance of forty miles by rail, twenty as the crow flies, the line drops 4,500 feet, it will be appreciated that Reza Shah's railway was a spectacular achievement. Branches were planned to reach Tabriz in the northwest, Meshed in the east and Yazd in the southeast. The Meshed and Tabriz branches were completed in 1957 and 1959. The Yazd connection is still being constructed.

It was decided in May 1925 to build a railway without foreign aid, the funds being obtained by a tax on tea and sugar. The Iranians have a very sweet tooth and, many years before, tea had replaced coffee as the chief beverage. The Majlis approved the railway construction scheme in February–March 1926 and work began in October 1927. It was at first under American consultants with a German expert acting for the Iranian Government. In the spring of 1928 a syndicate took over, comprising the American firm of Ulen and Company and the German interests, Philip Holtzmann, Julius Berger and Siemen Bau. The Germans had charge of the northern part, the Americans the southern. The section between Bandar Shah and Sari, the capital of Mazandaran, was completed in November 1929 and the southern portion, from the Persian Gulf to the entrance to the mountains at Andimeshk, about the same time. A pause followed until work was resumed in 1931. In 1933 the Scandinavian Kampsax Consortium took over as consultants and the work was let out in lots to various European contracting companies. A number of Iranians got their first taste of contract work as subcontractors, for material and transport, to the foreign firms.

By selecting firms from a wide range of nations the Iranian Government avoided seeming to favour or be influenced by any one foreign power; also no single power could reap the political embarrassments of failure or the discredit if anything went wrong. Richard Costain, a British concern, completed one of the most difficult mountain sections on the southern part and other lots were awarded to Italian, Belgian, Swedish, Czech and Swiss companies. Steel was imported from the U.S.S.R., which also supplied some of the cement. After the Second World War British United Steel obtained the rail contract, and also supplied locomotives; in the first instance, the oil-burning locomotives had been supplied by Sweden. Australia supplied the sleepers. Rolling stock came from Belgium, Germany and the U.S.A.; other equipment from Japan and Yugoslavia. The terminal at Tehran was built by a Swiss firm.

The northern and southern sectors finally met in the mountains between Khurramabad and Arak and there, on 24th August 1938, Reza Shah laid the last rail. He had himself walked over miles of the route, extracting from the tactful Danish and Swedish and German consulting engineers dates for the promised completion of various lengths of the line. On the dates, as often as not, he would again be at the place to see how far the promises had been kept. Shortcomings met with angry rebukes and awe-inspiring Pahlavi disgruntlement; it was a good thing the consultants were not Iranians or they might have been kicked, cursed and shaken till their coats and collars came apart in the Shah's grip. Such things did happen to Iranian officials. Good progress, on the other hand, overjoyed him and his zest for this railway is in retrospect a moving and endearing characteristic of this great and remarkable man. As Elwell-Sutton says, 'after eleven years of work, and at a cost of £30,000,000, the great project was successfully completed, and, perhaps for the first time since the Middle Ages, a major undertaking was carried through in an Oriental country without leaving it indebted to the finances of the West'.[1] In the next chapter it will, however, be seen that, although the country was not directly indebted to a foreign power, this and other ventures under the New Order were not without their financial repercussions.

[1] L. P. Elwell-Sutton, op. cit., p. 94. Elwell-Sutton's account of the railway project is one of the best available in English and I am much indebted to it as well as to the reminiscences of some of the European engineers who worked on it and, particularly, to Mr. William Goût, who later became an agent for British United Steel.

Chapter 18

The House built on Inflation

WHEN the railway from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea was completed the first priority on the list of transport problems which had been drawn up in 1924 was realised, all but the branch lines. Iranian engineers began the construction of these under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Roads and Railways. Before the Shah's abdication, lines had reached as far as Zanjan on the way to Tabriz; as far as Kashan on the way to Yazd; and as far as Semnan on the way to Meshed. By 1941 Qum, Qazvin and the decaying city of Kashan were linked with the capital. The embankment, bridges and stations for the branch to Yazd had been completed as far as Ardistan, within a few miles of the terminus. They were left for over twenty years, the gaunt reminders of one of the New Order's unfinished projects. In 1938 Reza Shah was praised in the press of his own country as a modern Rustam and poems were composed in the epic style describing how he had completed his *Haft Khan*, his Seven Labours, when he finished the Trans-Iranian railway. But what of the snags?

The tax on tea and sugar had made the raising of quick revenue possible but was conducive to inflation, whereas a tax on cotton goods, although less speedily productive of revenue, would have had the additional advantage of protecting one of the country's young industries and would have had a less burdensome effect in rapid price rises on articles in everyday and constant consumption.[1] In the location of railheads chauvinism had prevailed over commercial and human convenience. The railway was state-owned but at the same time private enterprise, which was to receive great impetus from British and American contracts for the transporting of goods during the coming war, was already zestfully entering the haulage field with lorries. As roads were also being improved, the railway encountered competition in freight carrying which was the more serious because Isfahan, Yazd, Kirman, Shiraz, Meshed, Tabriz, Hamadan, Kirmanshah, in fact no less than eight of the fifteen principal cities (counting Abadan and Khurramshahr), were not served

[1] cf. Banani, op. cit., p. 134.

by the railway; which also failed to reach any of the land frontiers, with Iraq at Khanaqin (a railhead of the Iraq railways), with Turkey at Bazargan (the nearest Turkish railhead Erzerum), with India at Zahidan (a railhead for the Indian railways) and with Afghanistan on the frontiers beyond Meshed. Meanwhile tariff exemptions for buses and lorries were introduced as well as reduced licencing fees, to encourage the development of motor transport.

In February 1926 the German firm of Junkers received a concession to carry mails and passengers by air between Iran and Europe and within the borders of the country, on condition that Iranian pilots were trained and the planes serviced in Iran, where service stations were to be constructed and completely equipped. Junkers went to work with a will and, among other things, did a thorough meteorological analysis of Iranian conditions, employing a foremost expert for the purpose. Thus a new basis was laid here and also great interest in learning to fly and service aeroplanes was stimulated among Iranians. In 1937 the Government bought three machines of its own for civil use and the air force was also developed to a small degree. In 1941, while the army numbered about 127,000 men and had a few tanks, some mechanised transport and parks of heavy and mountain artillery, there were only about two score of planes and these of obsolete make. This lack of military preparedness, in what was such a militaristic regime, caused severe critcism of Reza Shah after the defeat of 1941; people said that in this lay proof that the regime had been a sham. This criticism was internal but many of its clichés were of foreign manufacture and the fact was ignored that Reza Shah had considered himself ruler of a neutral and non-aggressive country. He was a soldier and the military posture came naturally to him and many of his chosen subordinates. He had spent his life in uniform. Further, he believed that military efficiency would help in reforming the country; but the army was intended to be used for civil reform, not primarily for purely military purposes. Its methods were to be imported into the administration; its presence was to be a guarantee of internal security; the smartness of its parade-ground turn-out was part of the window-dressing, and this was as far as Reza Shah had thought it would be necessary to develop his military arm until other more pressing departments of the life of the nation had been set in order. Symptomatic was the attention lavished on developing civilian air services, which availed themselves of military airfields.

Already before 1941, those who could afford it, and air travel in Iran has never been prohibitively expensive, had become more *blasé* about air travel than most of their contemporaries in Europe. They

had become accustomed to moving between one city and another by air, playing-cards out as soon as they were seated in the craft, and soon glasses of tea being handed round, just as if they were on the ground. The confidence of these passengers was, considering the local conditions, of high mountain ridges and valleys with pockets of hot air, surprising, and has been happily justified by the excellent accident record of air services operating in Persia. It has been less warrantably equalled by the amazing sangfroid of the vehicle drivers, whose fatalism seems to preclude the thought that their particular vehicle will ever go over the precipice or be the one to be carried off by a torrent, or so loaded that sooner or later it will roll over. One of the most interesting features of modern Iran is the way its people have accepted modern motor-cars and aeroplanes. They drive as if to the manner born and make excellent pilots. Lorry drivers undertake repairs on the road, miles away from anything remotely resembling a garage or workshop, which would daunt automobile engineers who are far better equipped and more experienced. Often a lorry is taken down and overhauled, on a mountain road, in an operation which takes several days before the truck is again grinding its way over the steep passes. Ignorance may be bliss, but also the ingenuity and aptitude of the Iranian workman are manifest in the skill of these patient and courageous mechanics, who manage so well on such slender means.

Broadcasting was not formally introduced until the Radio Station was opened in Tehran in April 1940, but before this broadcasts from Berlin and Ankara had been heard for half a decade. Soviet stations joined in the medley of propaganda at the outbreak of war and the British Broadcasting Corporation began a Persian service in December 1940. Locally the new medium was chiefly used for instruction in citizenship, modern hygiene, cultural and economic affairs – in the doctrines of the New Order. A Department of National Guidance was formed under the aegis of the Ministry of Education to direct the inculcation of the New Order's ideals and a patriotism in which admiration for the Shah was a strong element.

In 1932 the new legal provisions for the trial of people charged with plotting to overthrow the state were invoked, specifically, at the time, for the trial of a number of communists accused of plotting on behalf of a foreign power. With five exceptions they were sentenced to long periods of imprisonment. Many in Iran who were not communist saw in these men the martyrs to their own cause as an oppressed people, forced to keep silent. The German Government agreed to Iran's request that pro-Soviet Persian newspapers which were being published in Germany should be stopped. One was the

Sitareh-ye-Surkh, 'Red Star', an organ of the Communist Centre of Iran, which was printed in Leipzig. Another was *Paikar*, 'The Struggle', later called *Nazhat*, 'The Movement', printed in Berlin. From 1932 onwards the New Order clamped down firmly on all deviations from its own teaching, and intellectual expression, save what lent support to the regime and flattered its leader, was outlawed. In the next chapter we shall see the literary and intellectual outburst which followed Reza Shah's departure. Then the threads which went back to the movements of 1906, 1911 and 1915, and forward to those of the post-war years, were again brought to the surface.

Unfortunately the New Order was expensive. The chronic modern problem of Iran's shortage of money was not solved and the effort to operate a deficit budget made matters worse because the country lacked the firm economic prerequisites for successful expansionist economic policies, as well as lacking experience and understanding of the problems involved. For certain reasons the State favoured national monopolies, but only to a limited degree: in such an individualistic nation it would have been difficult to dispense altogether with private enterprise. A compromise resulted in which private companies were formed under state auspices. On the other hand, bold capitalism had a limited and hesitant development because of innate hoarding tendencies: the suspicion of investment which had been engendered by centuries of insecurity, alternating with hostility to government. People were willing to engage in schemes to get money but, having got it, preferred keeping it in a stocking.

In 1924 the revenue amounted to just over five million sterling and expenditure exceeded this by about £250,000. In 1941 the revenue was about forty-five million and expenditure running at over fifty million. The deficit was passed off as proof of progress and as nothing compared with other modern states. This would have been all right if Iran had been like those states in other respects. The greatest problem was obtaining revenue, and this was aggravated not only by tax evasion but also by the unwillingness of the rich to put their money into circulation. Interest rates provide evidence of the situation. They are still exceptionally high and in Reza Shah's time the current rate of interest between merchants of good standing was 18 per cent, and where the payee was not a merchant a usual rate was 24 per cent with increases in some instances up to 30 per cent. Yet paradoxically the tendency to keep money in a stocking, which in effect meant depositing it in foreign banks, had the corollary, already alluded to in the case of Vusughu'd-Daulah, of living on

debts. Mortgages were frequently raised on real estate and loans secured through pawning personal effects. Government regulations fixed the rate of interest on these transactions at, for example, eighteen per cent on jewellery, twenty-four per cent on other articles. Credit assumed tremendous significance, which accounts for the wide-scale purchase of landed property. Obtaining credit was considered preferable to spending money, the false assumption being made that somehow by this means savings remained intact while the necessities of life were being bought for nothing. This was of course the luxury of the rich and this is why it was so important to be rich, because then credit facilities were greatly enlarged, a process which, not only wealth, but also influence, facilitated. Usurious use of monetary capital had been irreligious, but floating credit on land and other effects was less obnoxious. It had been customary that the powerful man should get as much as possible for nothing; khans and conquering monarchs did not expect to pay for anything. Somehow living on credit satisfied the instinctive sense of what was right which had thus become ingrained. Had standards of morality been more definite and had it been possible to place more reliance on securities than in Iran's impoverishment, and with individual Iranian secrecy over actual assets, was possible, no doubt this prevalent love of credit dealing could have been turned to profit. As it was, significantly the foreign banks limited themselves mainly to discounting bills, to exchange business and to running current account deposits, not as a rule allowing interest on credit balances, unless the amount was large in which case one per cent per annum might be given. Only Persian bankers normally dealt with real estate mortgages. Meanwhile foreign investment in Iran was very difficult to attract, for reasons which the study of the preceding pages of this history will have made sufficiently obvious. The drain was more apt to be the other way: the very rich bought land, instead of financing industry or commerce, and the rest of their cash they put away in banks outside the country. Hence in the post-war years one of the scandals of Iran has been the huge fortunes deposited in Switzerland and elsewhere.

At the top of the scale the Government was unable to raise credit except from outside, as the Qajar governments had done, and which Reza Shah resolutely set himself against doing. The fact of the Government's inability to raise credit of course tells its own tale of the position of government in relation to the nation; and it meant that to make the ambitious expenditure of the New Order possible, the Government had to obtain that elusive commodity, cash. Hence the raising of revenue became a primary concern and among the measures resorted to effect this was the sale of large amounts of

state land. This procedure was accelerated after 1933 when the Majlis passed a bill permitting the unrestricted sale of state lands for cash. This altered the pattern of land ownership although it did not radically change the pattern of who controlled the land. Hitherto state lands had been leased to tenants who now became its owners as a result of the new government policy. In areas at a distance from the capital, the Khans and magnates who had rented the state lands became the owners, while nearer the capital army officers and people who had recently acquired wealth and were in favour with the regime had a chance of joining the ranks of land-owners. The Majlis was chiefly composed of land-owners and the men who had held leases of state-lands. Therefore, these people were in a position of advantage as soon as they had passed the bill enabling purchases of state lands to be made. Buying land was much in fashion. Besides raising revenue, the Shah could in this way keep the Majlis contented. Its members gained another windfall in 1937 when, in order to finance the new Industrial and Agricultural Bank, the Majlis was asked to authorise the sale of choice state-lands which still remained unpurchased in the vicinity of Tehran.

As for the tax system, the composition of the Majlis being what it was, no drastic reorganisation of the existing system could be expected and none occurred. While the New Order concentrated on dragooning the people into a superficial semblance of uniformity and kept the minds of the townspeople preoccupied with excitements like the unveiling of women and regulations about the dress of the men, football matches, athletic competitions, wrestling, weight-lifting, parades, new subjects in new schools and so forth, little was achieved in making the evasion of tax payments less, and practically nothing in the way of making the rich pay more. Income tax only came after Reza Shah's abdication, when Millspaugh introduced it in 1942. A corporation tax which, to a non-expert, would seem to have been much to the point, was introduced in 1930 but repealed three years later. Meanwhile the sale of state lands produced money to tide the Government over some emergencies and the tax on tea and sugar had admirably paid, to the great hardship of the people, for an uneconomical but splendid railway. But there was another source of revenue in which great hopes were placed throughout the reign: tariffs.

Although as time went on these were to some extent regulated with the protection of nascent industries in view, primarily they were looked to as revenue producers. The Customs were efficient and extremely difficult to evade; although it goes without saying that as the tariff regime was strengthened, contraband operations, a natural

outlet for a resourceful people in a country with thousands of miles of frontier, also increased. However, contraband did not help the ordinary merchant, on whom the Customs regulations bore most heavily, so that the mercantile classes in the traditional import trades became hostile to the regime. They began to feel that they were paying more than their fair share of the cost of the country's new glory.

In the field of foreign trade the struggle with Russia continued in a series of disputes between two partners who were the prisoners of each other's economies, the shackles on Iran being the heaviest. Monopoly arrangements were made and commercial conventions exchanged. Then the lop-sided relationship was altered by the conclusion of a commercial agreement with Germany in 1929; and, for a short time in 1940, of advantage to Iran was a clause in the Russo-German Agreement, permitting the duty-free transit of Iranian goods through Russia and making Iran's trade with Germany easier. By 1939, however, Irano-German trade had begun to rival that with Russia. Germany was sending 65,000 to 70,000 tons of iron to Iran annually as well as an increasing volume of machinery. In exchange Iran was supplying cotton, silver, gold, rice, caviare, skins, wool, silk, and dried fruits. Of these commodities, dried fruits, wool, cotton, skins and caviare formed the staple. German interest in increasing her influence in countries like Iran introduced an element of artificiality into these exchanges, whose tempo reached a high pitch when the German Minister of Commerce himself arrived in Tehran in April 1941. It is worth recording that Reza Shah's nationalism did not appreciably waver before German commercial endeavours to lend the helping hand. When the hand was opened, or, as the Persians say, 'read', it did not contain very much. Meanwhile, while dealing with Germany could introduce a counterpoise, the marriage of northern Iran with Russia could not be dissolved. In 1936 Schacht had been coldly received in Tehran, partly because at that date Iranians were not clear about how they stood under the Nuremburg anti-Semitic laws. This was later clarified when the Aryan brotherhood between the 'Nordic Race' and the Iranians became a favourite propaganda theme. Nevertheless it was naïve of the Nazis to think in 1941 that Iran would co-operate in Rashid 'Ali's rebellion in Iraq. Generally speaking Iranians do exactly the opposite of whatever Arabs happen to be doing, because of the broad Persian belief that Arabs are rapscallions and rarely up to any good anyway.

Nevertheless, German technical skill was readily exploited and there was no lack of cordiality in the sphere of cultural relations between Reza Shah's government and the Nazis. Many of the new factories,

new telephone, radio and railway installations were managed or at least put into regular operation by Germans who, in the case of the telephone and radio, provided the equipment. At the same time, Iran was to some extent a refuge for German Jews. Germans lectured at the Agricultural and Veterinary Colleges, in the University. In August 1938 the recruitment of Germans had reached such proportion that Russia protested. After a trade agreement of 1933 she herself had sent cohorts of technicians, so that for a time it had looked as if contracts for new flour mills, granaries, workshops and roads as well as future development of air services might fall exclusively into Russian hands. The Perso-Teutonic association naturally caused the U.S.S.R. considerable pique, but the New Order was Iranian enough not to forget old lessons in the art of maintaining a balance in its relations with the powers. None the less, the old antipathy to Russia and Great Britain in the end tipped the balance too far in favour of the Germans.

One of the New Order's principal weaknesses lay in its currency transactions. This is mentioned because already some indication has been given that Iran's post-war financial malaise had been incubated to a stage of alarming development before 1941. The depreciation of the rial was not stopped but advanced under the New Order, in spite of efforts to stem it. The Gold Standard Act of March 1930 could not be made effective and silver, the former basis of the currency, was not demonetised until six years had elapsed. On the other hand, foreign exchange control was taken rigorously in hand from 1930 and, after a brief relaxation in 1934 and 1935, became more restrictive. But this, like so much else in the New Order's attempts in the economic and financial field, was either to shut the door after the horse had gone, or to shut a door on a stable that had always been empty. The aim, to achieve statist economic self-sufficiency (similar to the aim of Kamalist Turkey), was understandable but its object, already obsolete and impossible to achieve.

Efforts towards it resulted in burdensome controls; in susceptibility to the very manipulation by foreign powers, to their advantage and the disadvantage of Iran, which it was desired to prevent; and to overvaluation of the rial. The controls upset the balance of the, still basically primitive, economy and led to rises in prices with no commensurate rises in incomes, to the detriment of consumers. The policy wedded Iran to soft currency countries, Germany and Russia becoming her dominant trade partners and, much stronger than she was, calling the tune, so that they threatened to keep the New Order in a state of economic servitude. The interlocking of industrial development with Germany, the chief exporter of iron, machinery

and technical advice, in itself occasioned a grave set-back to the country's nascent industrial growth when, after 1941, neither machinery nor spare parts were any longer forthcoming from the established source. Neglect of other branches of the economy in favour of this industrial endeavour made the set-back the more serious. Because of official overvaluation of the currency, Iran's exports had been hit at their most vital point, in agricultural products.

Apart from some attempt to improve the quality of agricultural products, mechanisation of farming had also been started. The Agricultural College at Karaj from 1929 had been intended as the nucleus of improved productivity. An American agronomist had been employed and in subsequent years Germans were invited. A Veterinary Institute at Hisarak near Karaj was opened in 1939 with a view to improving the quality of animal husbandry. In 1940 an Agricultural Exhibition marked the culmination of the New Order's strivings in this sphere and gave the Government the opportunity to show carefully chosen specimens of improved products – most of them from Karaj itself. For besides the necessity of first gathering a great deal of scientific data, scarcely any of which existed before the foreign agronomists arrived, and the collection and study of which required time, the innate conservatism of the agrarian section of the community militated against rapid change. In no other sphere did the New Order fail so markedly to penetrate farther than the surface. Karaj became little more than a neatly arranged museum of specimens with a model farm which bore hardly any resemblance to the reality outside. This is not to condemn it but merely to illustrate that it was not something on which hopes of an overnight agrarian revolution in methods and productivity could be based. As late as 1950 it was estimated that there were still less than a thousand tractors in Iran, only a hundred combines and forty threshing machines. The ox-owning peasant received a higher share of crops and enjoyed a higher status than his crop-sharing brethren. He was not, therefore, particularly prone to be a party to rapid mechanisation, even supposing that news of its possibility had impinged to any degree on his consciousness. Mechanisation reduced the gleanings which were left by custom for the women to collect after the harvest, and so the villager also would not be prone to welcome machinery that, though more efficient, would render his margin of subsistence even narrower. The cultivator was not interested in improvements that would not make him any better off but only benefit the land-owners, while perhaps they left the peasant even worse off. The present Government, in the 1950's and 60's, has been right in realising that the preliminary

to agricultural improvement is the readjustment of land ownership. Other questions connected with this realisation will be dealt with later.

The New Order paid little attention to land reform and more to agricultural efficiency, in terms which were favourable to the owners rather than to the cultivators. A Land Development Act of 16th November 1937 was aimed to encourage agricultural development, making the maximum possible use of land the legal responsibility of the owner. Government credit was to be made available to owners who lacked the necessary means to undertake to improve irrigation, construct rural roads, drain swamps and reclaim waste, set up health stations and so on. But the implementation of the Act was left entirely to landlords and vested in councils comprising the landlords of the various regions involved. When the landlord could rest assured that, without improvements, he would in any event receive something like fifty per cent of the crop in rent from his share-cropping peasants, he had little incentive to enforce measures for expansion and improvement, and none whatever to do anything which might lead to social and economic disruption of a system which worked so well to his advantage. And he was incapable of thinking in terms of improving the national economy: the only economy that concerned him was generally speaking his own. On 16th September 1939 the Majlis authorised the Ministries of Justice and Agriculture to look into the possibility of reforming the share-cropping ratios and the distribution of crops between landlord and peasant, but this was never brought into effect. It was a gesture which showed that people were aware of where the trouble lay, but agricultural reform remained for all practical purposes a dead letter under the New Order.

In this field the effects of the failure of human beings either to be adequately considered or sufficiently transformed in the New Order's process of change were only to a greater degree evident than in many other spheres. On the human side, the situation provided a gloomy prelude to the end of the New Order and beginning of a long period of turmoil. Centralisation had led to an increased and more active bureaucracy accompanied by strident urban arrogance, taking its example from the capital. With such a large measure of control vested in the administration, peculation had found fresh opportunities at a time when former restraints were being systematically weakened. Under Islam a system of organised charity had been recognised which, as the precepts of religion had been cast off and the religious fabric undermined, had almost entirely disappeared. The lot of the poor had thus become far more unenviable than before. A new hardness had crept into society and the new lesson had

arrived from the West that there was virtue in success (there were certainly tangible rewards in it) and failure to succeed met with its own deserts. Under the banners of the New Order material gain took precedence over social responsibility.

Reza Shah's reforms had fostered the avarice of a new type of person who perverted means intended for the well-being of the whole nation, to make them the means of private enrichment. As if to reflect this decline in the original purposes of his regime, the Shah himself as the years advanced had shown a mounting greed and morbid desire to acquire lands and wealth. He thus made it possible for some of his subjects to repeat the proverb about how a fish rots from the head downwards, as they profited from the general increase in depravity in public affairs which accompanied the mockery of traditional standards of conduct. When scandals reached the highest quarters and touched those most favoured by the dictatorship, and when police-state regulations held sway, it was easy for grafters and embezzlers to escape retribution. It was easy, also, for the Shah, perhaps, daily to become more cynical about the baseness of those round him, as he watched the old gang and its new recruits make hay under the Pahlavi Sun and the Lion's nose. His successor has, not surprisingly, made an effort to turn to the people.

Chapter 19

A New Reign Begins

It is perhaps not altogether correct to say that Britain did not lift a finger on behalf of Shaikh Khaz'al of Muhammareh in 1925. After he had fallen Britain raked up the question of the Iranian Government's debts in connection with the expenses Britain had incurred in organising and maintaining the South Persian Rifles. That the Shaikh should be allowed to return to his ancestral palm-groves on the banks of the Shatt al-Arab was also mentioned. He was not, however, allowed to leave Tehran, and his family, who for a few booming years had known so much wealth and enjoyed so much influence because of the presence of the Oil Company in the vicinity of their marshes and green belts of date-palms, was dispersed in poverty, their palace boarded up and their private pinnaces on the waterways commandeered. Nor was the British tax-payer reimbursed for the S.P.R.'s activities in maintaining order and defeating the machinations of German agents in South Persia during the First World War.

The incident is mentioned as one of the less fortunate episodes in British relations with Reza Shah. There was an element of pique in the British attitude, and of patronage. Patronage had become habitual in the period when Iran was the problem child and British officers, journalists and armchair diplomatists were accustomed to talking in terms of the 'Persian Question'. Reza Shah's nationalism was a new and slightly indigestible phenomenon for people who for years had been in the habit of saying, 'Take Persia for example . . .', as 'Persia' was tossed from one club armchair to another in interminable conversations about Britain's imperial responsibilities. Persia's taking itself so seriously was a new development, to which the clubmen did not immediately, or very graciously, adjust themselves.

The pique affected their brethren in the offices across the Park, where the India Office and the Foreign Office adjoined one another. Under Curzon's regime at the Foreign Office the great attempt had been made to answer the question, What was to be done about Persia?, by drafting the comprehensive Anglo-Persian Agreement of

1919. But Persia and the Persians had spurned the offer then made, of the most efficient, understanding and benign guidance any quarter of the globe could give them. There are a few in Iran, of an older generation, who, although at the time opposed to the Agreement, have lived to regret its rejection. They believe that Iran might have benefited from the creation of a good administrative service under British auspices; and are inclined to see, in advantages reaped from direct British control in India, the example of what Iran might also have enjoyed. In the field of Iran's foreign relations, however, whether Iranians had been willing to accept tutelage to Britain or not, it is unlikely that Russia would have permitted a British-dominated Persia much peace, and it was fear of Russian action which prompted men who were not impelled by emotion alone, to oppose the Agreement; Sayyid Zia, for example. Bolshevik weakness in 1920 and 1921 had not prevented the Bolsheviks' Gilan excursion; and Gilan was not relinquished until rejection of the Agreement had become a fact.

Following the rejection of the British offer, among those in England who concerned themselves with Persian affairs the attitude grew of 'letting the Persians stew in their own juice'. Persia was not, after all, any longer so vital to imperial strategy. There were difficulties with Iraq and Egypt, but these could be tackled; a policy of 'benevolent inaction' could be afforded for Iran. The policy was perhaps more inactive than benevolent. For very little effort appears to have been made to court Iranian goodwill. This was surprising in view of the oil interest. It meant that, when Iran again became vital to Great Britain and her Allies in 1940 and 1941, drastic action had to be taken, an insufficient ground of mutual trust and friendship having been laid for anything less than drastic action to be effective.

The policy of patronising inactivity was more hateful to Iran than perhaps a policy of downright antagonism would have been. The latter would at least have indicated that Iran was worth some positive response. Iranian pride was less injured in the long run by the mockery of a French cartoonist than it was by England's lofty lack of interest. The cartoonist satirised the Shah as *le schah des chats* in a drawing in a French newspaper and, after his protest had been met by a lesson on freedom of the press, Reza Shah broke off diplomatic relations with France. The episode made the world laugh and embarrassed hastily withdrawn Iranian students in France, who were about to sit their examinations. It made Reza Shah's lack of sense of humour seem obvious, although in fact, in spite of its manifestation at times in a slightly macabre fashion, the Shah by no means lacked humour. What he was doing was seeking recognition for his country,

and for himself as its symbol, on equal terms with other nations. He wanted above all to efface the image of a helpless, slightly ridiculous Persia. His ignorance of foreigners – the only foreign country he visited until 1941 was Turkey – made him choose on this occasion a most unhappy moment to assert himself, but the motive behind his action is clear and not uncommendable. He opened legations in a number of small countries which did not bear the burden of past associations with Iran and with which it was easier for Iran to feel equal. This policy made it possible to spread the emblem of the Lion and Sun into many regions of the earth, Mexico, Spain, Roumania, Holland, the Scandinavian countries among them. But above all Iran sought appreciation from the great Powers, Britain more than any other. There was the long association; and there was the sneaking admiration for England and its people and institutions which many Iranians undoubtedly harboured and still have. British indications that the New Order's efforts to restore Iran were appreciated would have been worth far more than German back-slapping; and a counterweight to the blowing hot and cold of the U.S.S.R. infinitely preferable to the Nazi counterweight eventually sought.

Not that Reza Shah made it easy for the British to react favourably to his person or his rule; he failed as much to recognise British sensitivity and pride as the British did Iran's. But he held his hand a great deal in matters affecting the British. He was careful to initiate legal reform before cancelling capitulations, in order not to offend them. The question of the Oil Concession was not seriously broached until 1932. He was extremely wary of the British and his and their hyper-sensitivity over their common problems did a great deal to worsen their relations – and yet the fact remains that Britain as the strongest party could more easily have taken the initiative in trying to break down the tension. This must be considered true when all the correction necessary, in the interests of fairness, for the advantages of hindsight have been applied, and when all the touchiness the Shah displayed in his dealings with the British have been taken into account. One factor only should perhaps give us pause: the emotional illogicalities into which history had somehow made the Iranian side to these petty misunderstandings ever inclined to plunge. This irrational response made removal of suspicion and establishment of mutual confidence unusually difficult for even the most skilled British envoys. And certainly the Shah's behaviour often presented the European satirist with material hard to resist, although it was material it would have been impossible to think of using had his aspirations been understood or had they won the sympathy which in many ways they deserved, whatever the errors of their application.

In any case, more cultivation of his friendship would have meant less trouble and expense, to say nothing of the anxiety Persia provoked in Allied councils during the first three years of the Second World War.

At first Iran placed the same confidence in the League of Nations as many weaker nations did and as Iran was again to do in the United Nations.

She became a member of the League in 1920 and the appeal to the League Council over the Bolshevik invasion has already been discussed. She accepted the authority of the Permanent Court of International Justice in 1932. During 1927 she revived the Iranian claim to the Bahrein Islands, a claim going back to a shadowy suzerainty exercised in this quarter until about 1783: between 1927 and 1936 several appeals were made to the League Council for recognition of this claim. The Treaty of Jidda between England and Saudi Arabia on 27th May 1927 seems to have precipitated the first round over Bahrein, because by the Treaty Saudi Arabia's Ibn Saud acknowledged the British protectorate of the archipelago. When the Shaikh of Bahrein granted oil concessions to American and British nationals in 1930 and 1934, there were further Iranian protests. Bahrein has always had a large Persian-speaking population of merchants and, more recently, immigrants who have fled to the prosperity begotten of oil in Bahrein, to escape the poverty of the opposite shore of the Persian Gulf on the Iranian side.

Britain's protectorate over Bahrein dates from a treaty with the Shaikhs in 1906, the outcome of a series of careful negotiations whose other culminating points had been in 1880 and 1892. These agreements had started with the laudable purpose of ridding the local waters of pirates and enduing the Persian Gulf with a peace and security that were to benefit all who used it. The discovery of oil was a much later development and, as it is exploited by Standard Oil of California in combination with the Texas Oil Company, might have made Iran irritated with America as much as with Great Britain; but for a variety of reasons in this, as in other instances, it was Britain that was blamed.

To bring the story up to date, in February 1948 the Majlis instructed the Government to restore Iranian sovereignty over Bahrein. On 23rd August of the same year, the Iranian Foreign Minister somewhat grandiloquently announced that his Government considered all arrangements among other powers relating to Bahrein null and void so long as Iranian sovereignty over the islands was ignored. The United Nations has been appealed to without a hearing being obtained, but recent shifts in policy towards Great Britain,

Iran's ally in the Central Treaty Organisation, have resulted in the matter's being shelved. Beyond demonstration it has never gone, and is usually only mentioned when the Shah wishes to counterbalance the criticism that he is subservient to Western, particularly British, pressure; not when Iran and England are being polite to each other.

The aura which clung to the British Legation in Tehran was anathema to Reza Shah for several reasons. Not only was there the bitter sense of inferiority producing the need for assertion against the British; a sense complicated by the idea that they might, after all, be the best friends Iran could have (they had in any event, been compliant enough when he rose to power), and by the suspicion that nevertheless they were too dangerous to be welcomed at close range. There was also the danger which the British themselves have not invariably fully comprehended; the danger of Britain's being the rallying-point for Iranian intriguers against the Crown. To understand this dread in the mind of an Iranian ruler it is necessary for the British to put themselves in his place in order to enter the interlocking cabinets of his imagination and probe it to its most morbid depths, as well as probing the depths of his countrymen's perfidy. Iranians have used the name of England to justify acts which would astonish and horrify British officials, very often the unconscious actors in well-established mythological roles.

Iranian Ministers might clear their crowded rooms if they thought a caller had a message purporting to be from the British; and it is very useful sometimes to command a Minister's ear. Therefore, claimants to special access to the British and to possession of British-inspired hints have seldom been wanting. Reza Shah was no more outside the octopoid ramifications of this fantasy of British subtlety and power than the majority of Iranians. During his reign he studiously kept aloof from the British: to court them would have been to give way to a fear of which no doubt he, a soldier, felt ashamed. It would also be to risk losing the confidence of the nation. To allow their advisers and agents to enter the country would be to risk the emergence of pockets of intrigue against him wherever some Isfahanian notable or Shirazi magnate was in a position to invite a stray Englishman to tea or for a shoot. The guest need not know the real purpose behind the invitation; the host could use hob-nobbing with the British as a boost to his personal influence.

On the other side, British aloofness was perhaps considered the best countermeasure by which gradually to lay the bugbear of the myth. The myth has taken a long time to die, partly because the Second World War gave it a new lease of monstrously sprightly life and partly because not all Englishmen have been alive to the distress

of normal relations, as between two nations, which it can effect. As for the war-time development, there were many in Iran who had waited two decades under the New Order for the return of the 'good old days', when they could again conjure with the name of Britain and their British connections to lend weight to their own pretensions. A host of British officers and officials arrived who were inexperienced in Persian guile and easy prey to the most corrupt elements of Iranian society. It is not surprising that on the morning after Reza Shah's departure a great Isfahanian notable could say it was the first day for twenty-four years that he had got up feeling secure. But now there were not only the old ad-Daulahs, al-Mulks, as-Saltanahs, eager to leap back into position and stretch out hands to the perquisites of influence; there were also the new creatures of the New Order, anxious to keep what they had already gained and to satisfy a freshly whetted appetite for more. Men bobbed up to the surface of Iranian affairs who would let themselves be seen entering the British Legation compound, situated so temptingly in the middle of a Tehran which had extended round it during the late reign, so that later in the day Ministers would brush aside other matters and lean across their desks to listen to what they had to say; thus small pieces of private business might be mysteriously expedited.

No mythology attached itself to Switzerland, with which Reza Shah concluded a pact of friendship in 1934; to Mexico and Argentina, with which he established relations in 1939; nor to Japan, with which he exchanged representation in 1939 – which was in addition that champion of the Orient who had defeated Russia in 1905.

America, also, was free of the burden of an imperial past. Millspaugh had been a suitable substitute to the British as a financial expert, and it seems as if in subsequent years the Shah sought a way out of the Russo-German commercial grip in developing trade with the United States. In 1940 the Iranian trade with America had suddenly doubled, while in 1937 a concession for oil in northeastern Iran, in Gurgan to be precise, had been granted to the American Amiranian Company. This concession was, however, useless because of transport difficulties and remoteness from markets, and was abandoned the next year.

The major quarrel with Britain was over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's Concession. The international depression resulted in a serious drop in payments to the Iranian Government, royalties for 1931–32 being half those in 1930. This, the only assured and substantial block of revenue, provided the unobtrusive but essential background to the country's economy. Dissatisfaction with the amount gained under the D'Arcy Concession had been long-standing, but

the Oil Company's profits had not been sufficiently dramatic for a strong basis of argument to exist. Great expenditure on development had been necessary and post-war prices for construction materials exceptionally high. A revised agreement had, however, been discussed as early as 1920, but no Iranian Government had accepted its proposals. In 1928 discussions were reopened and in 1929 Lord Cadman visited Tehran for negotiations. As was to happen some twenty years later, negotiations were protracted, to be outstripped by unilateral action on the part of the Iranians. The drop in royalties was too much for Reza Shah and on 27th November 1932, although discussions had never been closed, he cancelled the Concession.

This cancellation was defended by flimsy charges that the accounts had not been accurately rendered and that the Company had been making a larger profit than it had declared; and with allegations which, but for the depression, might appear less flimsy – that Iranian oil production had been held back to benefit A.I.O.C. operations elsewhere, in Iraq and South America, for example. The tremendous expansion of the refinery and storage facilities at Abadan and of the South Persian Oil Fields since 1915 would, however, seem to rebut this accusation. The case rested most strongly on the admittedly no longer contemporaneous royalty provisions of the original Concession. Basic facts unfortunately became blurred by more emotional complaints about the insufficient numbers of Iranians in professional positions in the oil fields and at Abadan; complaints which disregarded the paucity of Europeans, let alone Iranians, in those days willing or trained to operate in oil-fields, and the urban Iranian middle-classes' prejudice against employment outside Tehran, in areas they thought almost unfit for human habitation.

Yet again the Shah did not want to go beyond the point of no return in his relations with England. At the moment of cancelling the Concession, a new agreement with the Company was proposed. The Company do not appear to have considered this feasible and the matter was referred to the British Government, which owned over half the ordinary shares and a block of preference shares of two kinds, so that it had a control of over fifty per cent. His Majesty's Government sent a strongly worded note and there was also a small naval parade in the Persian Gulf; the kind of thing which is no help to good relations but which was anachronistically repeated in 1951; when perhaps relations were thought to have gone beyond repair.

Iran remained firm and Great Britain reported the matter to the Council of the League of Nations. Iran's understanding of the way the League worked was at this stage sufficiently developed for this

move not to be welcome, and objection was made on the grounds that the dispute was between the Iranian Government and the Concessionaire; not a concern of either the British Government or the League of Nations. At the same time, Iran repeated her willingness to negotiate a new Concession, but in January 1933 her Minister of Justice had to argue the case before the League Council. His opponent was Sir John Simon, who pleaded the Company's vast expenditure on development and the very real case of its reduced profits. Britain was none the less now ready to make a peaceful settlement and it was agreed to take the matter out of court.

On 29th April 1933 a new Concession was signed, to be valid for sixty years and not allowing for unilateral cancellation. The old arrangement of a payment to Iran of 16 per cent on net profits was replaced by an agreement on the Company's part to pay annually 20 per cent of the dividends on ordinary shares in excess of £671,250 and royalties on oil fixed at 4s. a ton sold and exported, while an additional 9d. a ton was to be paid in lieu of taxes as a tariff for the first six million tons, this being reduced to 6d. a ton thereafter for the first fifteen years of the Concession. Afterwards these figures were to be adjusted to 1s. and to 9d. respectively. The total annual payment was not to fall below a guaranteed minimum of £1,050,000. The sum of £1,000,000 was immediately paid in settlement of outstanding claims. Thus the New Order had made a better deal than the original one; although the new Concession extended the D'Arcy Concession by thirty-two years, from 1961 to 1993.

The Imperial Iranian Government was to have a delegate, maintained at the Company's expense, in the Company's Head Offices in London, and an Accountant, acting for the Imperial Government, was to be employed to watch the figures and check the computations. By the end of 1938 the Company was to have demarcated an area of 100,000 square miles, within which its operations were thereafter to be confined. It was progressively to reduce the number of non-Iranians in its service and to provide for an annual quota of Iranian students to go to the United Kingdom at the Company's expense for higher technical training. The Company's transport and communications services were to be at the disposal of Iranian government officials whenever they wanted them. In details of this kind, what had been the practice became a concessionary obligation, which in some instances might have meant that the Company was more chary of being generous than it would otherwise have been, before it was inhibited by the fear of creating awkward precedents.

As a result of the new Concession the training of Iranians received

a great impetus and later on the Company employed several former missionary school-masters to develop its educational and training activities, which, though not always viewed with enthusiasm by some of the directors, went a considerable way beyond the Concession's stipulations.

In the light of later events it was, perhaps, a pity that in 1933 an Iranian was not made a member of the Company's Board, although that Board had much business to handle which did not directly concern Iran. An alternative might have been a separate Board for the purely Iranian aspects of the Company's affairs, but such decentralisation as might have resulted would have been difficult in an oil company which had extensive and interdependent world-wide arrangements. As it was, an Iranian was appointed to the second highest executive position in the Company's offices in Iran.

The new Concession was a beautiful document; demanded by Iran, it was Iran which ran the greatest risk of being injured by it, for such legal instruments are double-edged. It was the Company's Rock of St. Peter and when Musaddiq dynamited it, the confusion was terrible to behold. On this rock, the Company could be generous, which it generally was; in 1940 and 1941, for example, when the German and Italian markets were lost, the Company, although faced with unprecedented strains, readily agreed to readjust the guaranteed minimum payments to Iran, bringing them up to £4,000,000. Meanwhile, after 1933, Reza Shah, who had passed Abadan on his yacht and looked the other way (into Iraqi territory) rather than cast eyes on it and the gleaming towers of the A.I.O.C.'s refinery, adopted a more friendly attitude. In the end he decided to visit the Company's areas, senior Company officials donning top-hats and morning coats for the occasion (they were described in the Persian press as being *mutabonjour*, a word made up from the fictitious stem of an Arabic verb and meaning, 'dressed in *bonjours*'). His admiration for efficiency and hard work had plenty to feed upon; oh, those British! He used to refer to them as the *Junubis*, 'the Southerners'.

For it was with the south of Iran that Reza Shah associated the British, and for a long time he had an aversion to that part of his realm; he could never feel that there he alone was the master, so pervasive was that other, old, foreign influence. Several years before he became Shah, he met Sir Arnold Wilson down at Bushire on the Persian Gulf. It must have been a remarkable encounter. They were both tall, spare men with large, sunburnt strong hands and glinting eyes. Their conversation was brief and to the point, Reza making it clear that he would not brook British interference in the South. Yet he brooked the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, leaving

that for the Pyrrhic victory of a far less shrewd opponent of his, Dr. Muhammad Musaddiq.

Besides pacts with remote countries, the friendship of immediate neighbours was cultivated, especially Turkey, whose Kamal Ataturk was one of the men Reza Shah most admired. The note of high patriotism in some of Reza Shah's policies is nowhere more apparent than in his arrangements with Turkey, Afghanistan and Iraq. Frontier adjustments had to be made and there was the problem of migratory tribes to whom frontiers are not of much meaning, except as another horrid example of obstruction and hardship imposed by central governments; although sometimes they may be used, like the borders of American States, to escape over from the arms of the law. An agreement with Turkey in 1926 paved the way for settlement of outstanding frontier problems and the difficulties over Kurdish tribes shared by the two countries. In 1923 friendly overtures melted away some of the suspicion between Iran and Afghanistan; 1925 saw the solution of Irano-Afghan frontier problems; 1929, the state visit of King Amanu'llah and his queen. Further questions with Turkey were settled in 1932 and in 1937, including matters relating to public health and postal and telegraph communications. Finally, in June 1939, the Lesser Mount Ararat and Aghri Range were made indisputably Turkish, Lake Reza'iyeh, Iranian. In 1934 the Shah visited Kamal Ataturk and sailed with him on board the presidential yacht over the glittering waves of the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmora; the President wickedly making one of the Shah's trusted young secretaries drain glass after glass of strong spirits till the young man had to be carried to his bunk. It was a convivial and successful meeting.

Iraq was more difficult, the sump into which Persian pilgrims annually pour so much revenue on visits to the tombs of 'Ali at Najaf, Husain at Karbala; and fill, at great expense, graves in the sacred ground with the bodies of recently deceased relatives. This was not the main problem, however. The dominant British position in Iraq, at first secured by a Mandate Agreement under the League of Nations, was unwelcome to Iran. Not until 1929 was a British request that Iran recognise the Iraqi regime complied with; but once Iraq had become independent in 1932, her King Faisal was received by Iran on a state visit and conversations on what was really the main issue could begin. By the Treaty of Erzerum in 1847 the Shatt-al-Arab had been declared an Ottoman possession as far as the low watermark on the Iranian side. Iraq took over this possession, for Iraq was composed of former Ottoman territory. Thus Khurramshahr, an Iranian port, could only be entered or left through Iraqi

waters. An application to the League Council in 1935 for the border to be redrawn midstream was unsuccessful, but on 4th July 1939, some concession was wrung from Baghdad and the mid-river line allowed opposite the oil-loading jetties at Abadan, while the entire Shatt al-Arab estuary was to be open to all commercial vessels and to the men-of-war of both nations. Either could allow the warships of another power to use the river if notice were given to the other signatory. Bandar Shapur was a port on Iranian waters, but as Khurramshahr continued the more important port, this concession did not solve a problem which has not yet been satisfactorily settled.

Reza Shah very much resented this river frontier, which he could not help but attribute to foreign interference in a manner detrimental to Iranian interests, for the Russo-British Frontier Commission of 1912–1914 had confirmed it. But he suppressed his ire sufficiently to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards Iraq, because he had a greater aim in mind. The Sa'adabad Pact was concluded on 8th July 1937, between Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Turkey, at the Shah's summer palace of Sa'adabad outside Tehran. This was the great alliance Reza Shah had wanted to engineer, perhaps as a step towards a grouping of Middle Eastern states, in combination with whom Iran might find the means to escape from the grip of the Great Powers, a common front being presented to Europe and Russia. He had concluded an agreement with Saudi Arabia in 1929 and in March 1939 his son and heir married the King of Egypt's sister, Fawzia.

The great exhibition of Persian Art at Burlington House in 1931 gave England a chance to show that its cultured and discriminating appreciation of the beauty Persian hands have contributed to the world of the arts had in no way diminished since political and commercial ties had ceased to be of the importance they were in the late nineteenth and early years of this century. British carpet importers had been affected by the New Order's state monopoly system. Those who were managing clusters of carpet-weaving villages (notably in the Sultanabad-Arak region and in Azerbaijan), or manufacturing their own carpets with Iranian labour at centres like Hamadan and Tabriz, had been to an increasing extent shorn of independence to organise the industry themselves. It was becoming more and more difficult for foreign enterprises to function. New regulations relating to factories were drawn up by the Department of Industries and Mines and approved by the Cabinet on 10th August 1936. They did not include specific rejection of the right of foreign nationals to establish industries, but the regulations were applied in all their

rigour to foreign concerns and, in conjunction with the state monopoly system and provisions restricting foreigners' property rights and freedom of movement, were a further instrument with which the Government could, if it wished, squeeze out foreign concerns altogether.

British-sponsored enterprises were particular targets; although the skill and experience of a man like the late A. C. Edwards, doyen of foreign carpet dealers and manufacturers, being one of the principal initiators of organised production, were frequently placed at the disposal of the Iranian authorities in their laudable efforts to improve and maintain standards of carpet dyeing and weaving. Thus, on the individual plane, old friendship and understanding subsisted; but Iran was no longer open to unimpeded foreign enterprise. The numbers of British commercial representatives, in cities like Yazd, Kirman, Isfahan, Hamadan, Tabriz, declined; as did the prosperity of the southern cities, Shiraz included, which had depended on the British-India trade; and on opium exports, which were becoming subject to severe restrictions.

However, in 1939 the Earl of Athlone and Princess Alice went to the Crown Prince's wedding and a credit of £5,000,000 was extended to Iran, but had to be withdrawn when war broke out. The signs in that fateful year were those of a warmer phase of relations between Iran and Great Britain; and in May 1941 efforts were made to ease the effect of the war-time blockade on the Iranian merchants, when their country was included in the 'Navicert' system.

The Iranian tendency, however, to assume that the Nazi victories in Europe and North Africa meant England's ultimate defeat, and Iranian dependence on German technical aid made the pro-German bias strong. To the already significant number of German teachers and technicians in the country were added a swelling crowd of German 'tourists', and by the summer of 1940 the Allies' anxiety over these numbers of Germans was becoming serious. Iran had declared neutrality in the European War on 4th September 1939, and similarly Iran lost no time in issuing a declaration of neutrality in the Russo-German conflict, on 26th June 1941. But friendly warnings had to be presented by the Allies to the Iranian Government in 1940 about the influx of Germans, and these remonstrances were followed by the suggestion that the visitors be expelled. The answer was that such action would be a breach of neutrality. On 15th July 1941, a letter from the Iranian Ambassador in London was published in *The Times* denying that Iran was unduly under Axis pressure, stating that in any event it was strong enough to resist pressure, and

taking refuge in the laws governing the residence of foreigners on Iranian soil, quoting these as a means of controlling aliens' actions.

However sincere Reza Shah's desire to remain neutral and uninvolved in the war might have been, the psychological factors, of Nazi opposition to Communism once Russia and Germany were ranged against each other, and of Nazi successes against the Western Powers, weighed heavily both with him and with many of his subjects. When Great Britain and Russia were allied once again, German propaganda was able to develop a poignant theme for Persian consumption. Britain had done too little to nurse Iranian goodwill in the years following 1919. Iranian suspicions of Russia had never had occasion to be in the least allayed during the same period and Soviet troop concentrations from 1939 on her frontiers caused alarm. On 1st August 1940, when Russia and Germany were still allies, Molotov had singled out Iran and Turkey for accusations of complicity in an Allied bombing raid on Baku, and this increased Iran's almost panic fears of Russia. The Nazi invasion of that country might have seemed to offer at last the possibility of liberation from an old menace and there was an upsurge of pro-German feeling. The Shah, now no longer a young man but a man on whom years of unremitting and excessive toil were beginning to tell, was not free of delusions and had no very realistic grasp of the international situation. He was not a man anyone could advise; wise and moderate men, of whom there were still one or two in his entourage, were roughly silenced and could do and say nothing.

The ghastly tragedy seemed inevitable. A first Russian Note of 26th June 1941, a joint Anglo-Russian protest over the ubiquity of Germans on 19th July, and a more strongly worded representation of 16th August, failed to produce any satisfactory response, although in reply to the August protest the Iranian Government did attempt to fashion a compromise: it was playing for time when there was no time left. The offer was that *all* foreigners would be progressively expelled, an expulsion whose effective completion would have been as impracticable as it was, in Reza Shah's eyes, no doubt desirable. On 25th August, following Soviet urging which had begun as soon as Russia joined the Allies, while Iran had also been pointedly reminded of the provisions of the 1921 Treaty with Russia, the Anglo-Russian invasion began. The Iranian army resisted for three days. Then the Government resigned and orders were given for all opposition to cease. Russia occupied Azerbaijan, the Caspian Provinces, Northern Khurasan; Britain, the oil-producing areas in the southwest. The purely military nature of the occupation was emphasised and promises of immediate withdrawal, when circumstances

warranted it, made. The Shah and his chief citizens were most afraid of the Russians. 'Ali Khan Furughi, one of Iran's last philosopher-statesmen, became Prime Minister and provided a steadying influence which was very necessary. The privileged classes were in an agony of uncertainty; the Majlis, which was filled by the leaders of those classes, was in an uproar. 'Ali Khan posted his sons at telephones in his house to answer constant inquiries with reassuring phrases, and he told the Majlis that the foreigners 'would come and would go and would have nothing to do with anybody'.

But the Tehran-Qazvin road again sounded with the tramp of Russian boots. Soviet tanks and lorries began to rumble inexorably towards the capital; it was November 1915 all over again, and again the Shah, not this time a fat Qajar boy-prince but an Old Cossack soldier who knew and loathed the Russians, trembled. On 16th September 1941 he left the city for Isfahan and left behind him the letter of abdication he had ordered 'Ali Khan Furughi to draft for his signature. The Anglo-Russian denigration of his person and his achievements, and the decision that the Allies should move into the suburbs of Tehran to hasten the rounding-up and expulsion of the Germans, had at last made him think that in order to preserve his dynasty prompt action was necessary. He must abdicate in favour of his son while freedom to abdicate and choose his successor still remained to him. The wireless propaganda attacks on him which were beamed on to his people make a disagreeable episode in the history of British broadcasting. It was at this time that the imputation was made that, as the British had brought him to power, so might they remove him; an imputation that was not quite historically accurate and that many Iranians have found it difficult to forget, while some have found it impossible to forgive. Among the latter is Reza Shah's son, Muhammad Reza Shah, who appears to believe that the Allies intended all the time to destroy his father. In fact it is unlikely that elimination of Reza Shah was an Allied war priority in those days or at any other time, or that so far as Great Britain was concerned it was even on the agenda. With the Russians, however, it may well have been a consideration, as Reza Shah feared it might be; a ruler of his vigour in Iran was unlikely to have been relished by the Russian regime, any more than it would have been by its Tsarist predecessors.

Iranian attempts to play for time did not end with the invasion. Orders to cease resistance could, it was soon realised, be interpreted by the Iranians to mean the beginning of another line of action and the Allies' growing concern was not unfounded. Tehran was spared occupation at first for two weeks, but to the dismay of the British

and Russian envoys the terms of the armistice were not apparently being taken as seriously as they should have been by the Iranian authorities. The terms included the evacuation of all Germans, but after the invasion the large German Legation staff continued its activities, if anything more blatantly and with more energy, while nine hundred Germans whose expulsion had been a first requirement were being kept in the Legation's summer compound under German diplomatic protection. This rather looked as if the Allies had not taken the extreme step of entering the country at all, and as if it was expected that by some miracle final acquiescence in the Russo-British demands would not in the end be necessary. The 'miracle' was to be worked by protracting Iranian discussions with the Allies long enough for Germany, perhaps, to act; at least, that Germany might act was the optimistic rumour spread about by the German diplomatic staff. In any event, every moment of delay was precious to the Germans as it gave them extra time to plan for the future in a changed Iranian scene: establish their contacts, deploy their agents and adopt fresh emergency measures. This was exactly what the Allies were most anxious to prevent them doing. Occupying Iran was going to be delicate enough without further, avoidable complications. As it happened the Germans did benefit from the Iranian Government's procrastination following the Allied invasion; their agents were able to slip out of Tehran and head for the tribes.

Iran made a vain appeal to the United States. Still Reza Shah seemed incapable of coming to grips with the realisation that all was over with 'the glory, the intuition, the amenity'. He was displaying 'that egotism which has been remarked as the characteristic of self-taught men, and which degenerates into obstinate prejudice or petulant fickleness of opinion . . .' He was evincing an amazing ignorance and a serious inaccessibility to opinions other than his own: it is reported that he struck his War Minister and had him sent to jail for suggesting that the Allies' terms must at once be complied with.[1] The presence of foreign troops, however, gave the politicians courage: the Majlis began a campaign agitating for early compliance with the Allies' demands, for the consequences of further delay were greatly to be feared. Then the forward movement, towards the capital, of Russian troops did what neither Allied notes – none of which had suggested abdication – nor Majlis representations had succeeded in doing. The Shah knew that he could hold on no longer and went. He ordered his own abdication as he had been ordering everything for twenty years.

When he passed through Kirman and Yazd, he was seeing for the

[1] Sir Claremont Skrine, *World War in Iran*, London, 1962, p. 82.

last time cities to which his reign had brought little advantage and in which there were people on the verge of starvation. He boarded a ship and on 27th September 1941 was taken to Bombay from the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas. He had remitted money to Indian banks but his British hosts did not think it advisable for him to be allowed to stay there. Without being allowed to land he was put on board another steamer to sail to Mauritius. For health reasons he was later transferred to Johannesburg, where he died on 26th July 1944. It is said that before leaving Iran he filled a case with Persian soil, the *Khak-i-pak-i-Iran*, the precious dust of Iran. Also that, on the last journey, some of his treasures were plundered; carpets, it was alleged, were missing from the baggage. If this were true, then Iran would have treated a defeated and departing monarch in traditional style, except that, unlike Darius, the last of the Achaemenians, and Yazdagird, the last of the Sasanians, Reza Shah was at least spared the assassin's blow.

Chapter 20

Turning to America

When the British and Russians intensified diplomatic protests to Iran about the Germans there in June, July and August 1941, on the eve of entering the country, the Iranian Ambassador to Moscow, M. Sa'id, told his American colleague that he considered the British the instigators of the Russian participation in this diplomacy of pressure. Through the publication of papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States up to 1943, we know that some time about the middle of July 1941, Maisky, the Soviet Ambassador in London, 'suggested to Mr. Eden that the British and Soviet Governments make joint representations to the Iranian Government urging it to get rid of between 5,000 and 10,000 German agents operating in Iran'.[1] The figures are more like those habitually used by the Russians than the British in this story of the danger of the number of Germans harboured in Iran. British and United States estimates do not exceed 3,000 and hover round the 1,500 mark; in the end the vital, potentially active Nazi element could be isolated at seven (or with dependents, nine) hundred persons, being those whose fears of the Allies, and consequently to some extent those whose consciences, drove into refuge in the German Legation after the occupation had begun.

M. Sa'id's allegation that the British instigated Russian participation in the last and most severe note handed to the Iranian Government on 16th August, unsatisfactory replies to which were the immediate provocation of the occupation and the final notes of the early morning of 25th August, is a strange error, all the more so because at the beginning of the War Russia was the bogey; also, M. Sa'id was, in his American colleague's view, 'pronouncedly pro-British'. The explanation might perhaps lie in the British being unfortunately encumbered with the harvest of Persian psychological reactions: also the horror of yet another Russian invasion was in fact more than the Iranian could bear to face, especially an Iranian like M. Sa'id, who knew the Russians and the history of his country's

[1] *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1941*, Vol. III, p. 386.

relations with them so painfully well.[1] Therefore somehow the subconscious suggestion had to be heeded, that it was not, it *must* not be the Russians who were the principal culprits, but the British.

M. Sa'id's mistaken supposition is mentioned simply to illustrate, by one small example, the deviousness of judgment which fear can induce; and from the end of 1939 until the morning of 25th August 1941, the chief apprehension that haunted the minds of Iranian statesmen, and particularly of Reza Shah, was that Russia would take advantage of the War to recommence nibbling at the territory of Iran and bullying the Iranian Government.

The fact that the Shah was soon disenchanted with his German friends has subsequently been cited as an argument against the extreme measure to which Britain and Russia were compelled to resort. It is, therefore, treated with suspicion as being part of an attempt to justify Reza Shah and support the argument advanced by, among others, his son, Muhammad Reza Shah, in his autobiography, that invasion was unnecessary: that Reza Shah would have co-operated with the Allies had they been more frank with him.[2]

Although there must be some element of speciousness in these defences of Reza Shah, undoubtedly Russo-Nazi accord in the early days of the Second World War would make him reappraise his ties with Hitler's Germany. Russia lost no time in beginning to press for a Commercial Agreement, the draft terms of which made the Iranian Government express fears of loss of their country's economic independence. Already by early December 1939 the Persian Finance Minister could reveal to Engert, the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires in Tehran, his suspicion of a 'secret understanding (of Russia) with (the) Reich under which (the) Soviet Union could seek to revive her dominant position in the northern provinces'.

The Persian Finance Minister's suspicions were justified, although they preceded the event by some eleven months. It was not until November 1940 that the Draft Agreement between the States of the Three-Power Pact (Germany, Italy and Japan) and the U.S.S.R. was drawn up, presumably by Nazi officials and Molotov during the latter's visit to Berlin in that month.[3] According to this document's

[1] M. Sa'id was a Russian speaker and of a family which originated in the former Persian provinces overrun by the Russians in the nineteenth century, and he had a White Russian wife.

[2] See Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, London, 1961, pp. 72–73.

[3] See George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1949, p. 193 and Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, New York and London, 1956, pp. 228–30.

Draft Secret Protocol No. 1. (4) 'The Soviet Union declares that its territorial aspirations centre south of the national territory of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Indian Ocean'. In addition – for under cover of entering into somewhat premature arrangements for the division of the world into spheres of influence the Soviet Union was working hard to ensure its immediate interests – Molotov called on Schulenberg on the evening of 25th November and made certain conditions for accepting the Four-Power Pact. The third condition was that 'the area south of Batum and Baku in the general direction of the Persian Gulf' be recognised as the Soviet Union's 'centre of aspirations'.

Iranians' alertness to the danger of their position once Russia and Germany were engaged in a war one of whose chief contenders, Britain, had essential oil interests in Iran and was also concerned for the Indian Empire, towards which Iran was a corridor, is signified by early Iranian suspicion of what might be afoot between the two callous totalitarian states. Nevertheless Reza Shah dare not antagonise Russia by refusing outright to conclude the Commercial and Navigation Agreement eventually signed on 25th March 1940 – after, it must to Iran's credit be noted, his government had shown considerable mettle in seeking modification to the most stringent clauses.

As the Iranian Ministers told the American envoy, their country's economic freedom had to be preserved. As the Russian negotiators made it quite clear that they considered economics and politics closely connected with each other, the Iranians knew that total loss of economic freedom would shortly mean loss of political freedom as well. On the other hand, the economic dependence of northern Iran upon the Soviet Union made it necessary for Iran so to act that, while political freedom might be preserved, the economic viability of the country should be preserved also. Fortunately, and this can repeatedly be seen in modern Russo-Iranian relations, the U.S.S.R. is to some extent dependent upon commodities available from Iran, such as rice and fish. Thus the economic wedlock of the northern and southern neighbours works both ways.

Russia's caution over it indicates that however powerful and overweening the great Communist Power may appear in a purely political and strategical context, doctrine and politics aside she cannot entirely ignore the underlying exigencies of trade in basic natural commodities. The economic link imposed by geography upon Iran and the U.S.S.R. has acted as a modifying factor when the temptation to Russia to take the direst advantage of that geographical proximity has seemed well-nigh irresistible, with the result that

a great and ancient nation faced annihilation. The point is worth emphasising because the tendency only to regard political and military contingencies could result in the requirements of producers and merchants, and in the food requirements of ordinary people, being overlooked. Political alignments are also involved: not a few notably pro-British Iranians have had occasion to say to their British friends 'Our rice must be sold; the people of our northern provinces cannot be left to starve, their harvests rotting without a market'. Politics give way to the perennial necessities of the bazaar.

However, in 1940 there was also the expanded trade with Germany – Germany to which Reza Shah had turned in an effort to escape complete dependence on the two Powers he so much dreaded, Russia and Great Britain. There is reason to believe that what finally made the Russian Commercial Agreement acceptable to Iran was its adequate provision for the transit through Russia of exports and imports between Iran and Germany. This was all the more necessary because of the effects of the British blockade, which was disastrous to an Iran so closely as to be almost exclusively geared to the German trade in a wide range of essential imports. Reza Shah's New Order had created great new needs, while the heavy cost of his programmes had left the country too penurious to have any scope for manoeuvre, and restricted to commercial relations with countries who were not in fact operating their international commerce on a purely commercial basis. If this artificial trading stopped, Iran was faced with ruin and economic chaos. But if it continued, Iran was tied to only one side in a war in which it was the Shah's intention to remain neutral.

There seemed to be one way round the dilemma: turning to America. The Irano-Soviet Treaty of Commerce and Navigation of 25th March 1940, besides its provision (in Article 10 (i) and (iii)) for free transit through Russia of goods destined for a third country enjoying agreements or pacts with the U.S.S.R.,[1] i.e. Germany, certainly had its political 'edge' to it: on reading it one recalls the Treaty of Turkomanchai of 1828. In addition to the foreseeable, normal provisions for minimum and privileged Customs rates, etc., there are meticulous and lengthy arrangements for the establishment in Iran and the protection and diplomatic immunity (even to details of the private places of residence) of a Soviet 'Commercial Agency'. This body, ushered in with so much careful verbiage, was 'to extend economic relations between the U.S.S.R. and Iran, and to have branches in Tabriz, the port of Pahlavi, Meshed and, subject to the Iranian Minister of Commerce's sanction, wherever else might be

[1] See *British and Foreign State Papers*, Vol. CXLIV, p. 419.

necessary'. The way was again being prized open for a Soviet infiltration; negotiations had also been clouded by Soviet demands for the immediate release of prisoners held in Iran on charges of communism.

Another turn of the screw was signified by Article 9 whereby the Iranian Government agreed not to enforce currency restrictions detrimental to the Treaty's operation. Allusion has been made in the preceding chapter to Reza Shah's attempts to safeguard the currency; in the course of the next few years Iran was to have reason to remain extremely sensitive on this point.

Yet another extremely dangerous provision, bitterly struggled against by the Iranian negotiators, was Section 8 of Article 9: 'The Iranian Government agrees to grant to the Commercial Agency of the U.S.S.R. in Iran, and to economic organisations of the Soviet, the right to set up petrol pumps in Iran and to construct petroleum storage depots and other buildings necessary for dealing in petroleum and its products . . .'. This virtually broke the monopoly for petrol distribution enjoyed by the Iranian Government's concessionaire in the south, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. This aspect of it would worry the Iranian Government, but what was more alarming was the deliberate extension, to be inferred from it, of commodity dependence on Russia. Northern Iran was to be made entirely an economic annex of the U.S.S.R. with geography the justification, the haul to Azerbaijan from the oil-fields at Baku being less than from Abadan.

Reza Shah's dilemma was well described in a telegram from Engert, the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, of 17th October 1939 – when State Department officials on the spot seem to have shown a remarkably sound sense of the position, although their somewhat harassed superiors in Washington, so deeply involved in a World War they were not yet fighting in, were for another year and five months to pursue a wavering course ultimately very detrimental to Iran. Engert reported: 'Iran's foreign policy appears to be in a fluid state because the Government must tread carefuly if it is to remain on equally good terms with Russia and Great Britain. The Shah undoubtedly wants to go his own way and has on the surface adopted an attitude of detachment towards the European war. He is above all intent on avoiding if possible the recurrence of the unfortunate experiences during the last war. He will probably do nothing reckless nor deliberately provoke displeasure in Moscow but many factors are already conspiring to make his task a very awkward one.'[1]

Not only the chance that the Commercial *Qarādād*, Agreement or 'Convention', of March 1940 with Russia would permit the flow of

[1] *Foreign Relations*, 1941, Vol. III, p. 623.

goods to and from Germany made it more acceptable, but also no doubt the acquisition of Germany's promise, delivered earlier in March, by the newly arrived German Minister, Erwin Ettel, that Russia would not be 'allowed' to invade Iran. This must have done a great deal to boost Iranian morale. This was, however, just at that time also high on account of Finland's stand against the might of Russia; Reza Shah was reported to have been deeply impressed by Finland's gallantry. Persian dismay over the Finnish capitulation only a few days later was correspondingly great, though optimism remained that Russia would be more cautious of infringing the rights of small nations in future. The Baltic situation generally throughout the spring of 1940 was carefully watched from Tehran; and generally only served to increase Tehran's apprehensions.

Turning to Britain as a way out was impossible because the Persian Government justifiably feared that this would only directly exacerbate the Russian threat. Therefore, Reza Shah and his Ministers began to look to the United States. Engert was contacted almost daily by the Iranian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and given detailed information of the negotiations for the Russian Trade Agreement. These important confidences from members of the Cabinet up to 25th March 1940 were the preface and later accompaniment to attempts on the part of Iran to arrange a commercial agreement with the United States.

It was in January 1940 that the Prime Minister, Dr. Matin Daftary, sent for the American envoy to tell him how much the Iranian Government would appreciate it if the State Department could lend its good offices to Iranian attempts to place large orders for goods in the U.S.A. and, if possible, obtain a loan. This marked a return to an earlier effort to conclude trade negotiations with America, an effort which had lapsed over a year before. This time the effort was to continue on Iran's part with increasing momentum until the Russo-British invasion; shortly after that episode, the initiative changed to the U.S. Government – hitherto it had been entirely Iranian – when it was apprehended that Russia and Great Britain might be able to take advantage of their position in Iran in such a way as to damage America's post-war interests.[1]

As early as 21st December 1939 the arrival in Iran of a Standard Oil Company representative from America was reported to Washington. He had come to seek a major concession and it was accordingly thought that the U.S. Government would have known of his mission.

[1] See Ambassador Wallace Murray's Memorandum (as Chief of the State Department Division of Near Eastern Affairs) dated 5th November 1941, para. 2, in *Foreign Relations*, 1941, Vol. III, p. 373.

As it happened, the State Department's first intimation of Mr. Anderson's visit to Iran was from their Legation there. The Iranian Government was in a delicate position; it would be extremely hard to convince any Persian politician that Standard Oil's representative *could* have left home without his Government's knowledge of what he was after. Iran was already more than toying with the idea of obtaining a loan from America and entering into a commercial tie which could snap the nut-cracker hold of Nazi and, as was already to be envisaged from Soviet proposals, Communist trade pacts. However, nothing came of Mr. Anderson's trip; the U.S.S.R. were strongly opposed to the granting of any concession in the north and the Iranian Government wisely decided not to grant any concession in either the north or south. At least, this is what was said; although some gauge of Reza Shah's financial worry is offered by the hint that talks might continue if the notion of a United States loan could be embraced also.

This phase of the oil story ended after a return visit of the Standard Oil Company representative the next year, in December 1940. He came back because – and from this a clue appears on how Standard Oil were thinking in those days – it seemed just conceivable that the Company might be allowed to engage in geological explorations for a time, so that the necessary data might be obtained and time saved should a concession be granted when war-time uncertainty was no longer an inhibiting factor. Soviet and Axis pressure proved too much and Anderson again left empty-handed, although the United States Government do not appear in succeeding years ever completely to have forgotten that this particular door had seemed once to have been almost ajar.[1]

Whatever some Iranians may have thought, the occasional probings by American oil corporations into the possibility of the exploration and exploitation of Iran's oil resources were none the less separate from United States Government activities. In fact one of the main stumbling blocks to an Iranian commercial agreement with the U.S.A. was the major difference between the United States Government's relations with business enterprise, and the relations with it which were a feature of the Nazi and Soviet governments' involvement in commerce. Iran could not understand that the State Department was unable to dictate to American businessmen with whom, and upon what terms, they should trade. American manufacturers and exporters were owed money in Iran, or had rial payments which they could not get out of Tehran, on transactions dating back

[1] See *Foreign Relations*, 1940, Vol. III and 1941, Vol. III for occasional references to oil in communications on the Secretary of State level.

to before the currency laws of 1936. With this experience they were not surprisingly lacking in enthusiasm to meet Iran's sudden and increasingly urgent desire to trade with the United States. Moreover, since American commerce was commercial, not political, there was scepticism about Iranian proposals that trading should be as far as possible based on an equal exchange of goods. Nazi accommodations to Iran had established for that country a principle quite alien to American practice; Americans were not so anxious to do business with Iran that they would contrive artificial means of meeting Iran's requirements. It was both difficult to see what United States' commodity needs Iran could satisfy and, indeed, for a long time difficult to elicit from the Iranian Government any indication of what Iran expected to obtain in the United States, apart from some fifty bombers, thirty pursuit planes and, of course, money.

When an Iranian Trade Delegate went to America two incompatible systems met. The Iranians wanted something similar to the state-trading arrangements they had with Germany, in adjustment to which they had established their own system of state monopolies in the days of the first struggle with the new Russian Republic. But in America they had to deal with firms which were free of Government control and interested only in selling in the best market, regardless of political considerations.

The U.S. Government, however, was not entirely frank with the Iranian Minister, Shayastah, in Washington. There were officials in the State Department who considerably sympathised with Iran and who were not unaware of Reza Shah's predicament. Also, they did not want to risk an outright rebuff: it was essential to keep Iran enthusiastic for closer ties with America, even though just how such ties could be established was not presently clear. An eye had to be kept on commercial rivals; much diplomacy was used to keep Iran assured of American sympathy for the desire to trade, even when nothing concrete was achieved in either raising a loan on American banks or getting trade between the two countries moving. In the end, although on 8th February 1940 the Secretary of State instructed his officer in Tehran to explain that his government 'would not, of course, be disposed to consider any arrangement for placing Iranian-American trade on a private barter or compensation basis, since such an arrangement would be contrary to the well-defined policy of this Government of conducting its foreign trade relations on a multilateral basis in accordance with the principle of unconditional most-favoured-nation treatment', that officer was perhaps being a little more explicit than Washington wanted when he went so far as to explain to the Iranian Foreign Minister 'that . . . unlike totalitarian

states we were obviously unable to bring pressure to bear on our commercial and financial institutions to engage in operations which were purely a matter of private enterprise.'

This obvious explanation was not recorded as forming an important part of numerous conversations with Iranian representatives in Washington. Perhaps there the American officials thought it too obvious to need stating; or a piece of logic the Iranians were incapable of understanding. The Foreign Minister in Tehran had merely replied, typically and perhaps with a logic of his own, that 'he thought there were many informal ways in which a Government could encourage or discourage such activities in the foreign field'![1]

The Iranians had at least one card up their sleeve and that was the outstanding matter of payment for the expropriated properties of American Missionary Schools in Iran. They had little intention, it would seem, of finding a by no means small amount of dollars to meet the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission's valuation of school property in Tehran and elsewhere, following Reza Shah's refusal to allow British and American Mission colleges to continue functioning autonomously. But so long as the vexed question of compensation for the American Missionary Board's property remained unsettled, Iran had a lever on the American authorities, and the latter, additional reasons for not wishing to antagonise the Iranian Government. United States businessmen's attitude may be seen in the question asked of the State Department by one of the U.S. war-time supply and control departments regarding what the *quid pro quo* for trade concessions to Iran was to be, because 'if it was merely a matter of the payment of half a million dollars to some missionaries, that did not amount to much'.[2]

No, the dispute over school properties was only a small means of bringing pressure to bear upon the United States Government, only a few of whose diplomatists with first hand experience of Iran – Wallace Murray for example – could be expected to warm to the remonstrances of the Presbyterian Board. But to Reza Shah in 1940 any lever, however small, with which to shift the United States Government could not be ignored. He was desperately anxious, it now seems clear, to break out of the German-Soviet nexus in which he had become almost inextricably entrammelled. The only hope seemed to be the establishment of ties with America. Admittedly, owing to the War and the British embargo, the non-availability of industrial equipment, medicaments, etc. from normal sources of supply influenced Iran's eagerness to purchase from America; while

[1] *Foreign Relations*, 1940, Vol. III, p. 668.
[2] *Foreign Relations*, 1940, Vol. III, p. 653.

America seemed the only great nation in a position in 1940 to purchase from Iran such items as rugs and carpets, carpet wool (supplies from India were no longer forthcoming for the American market), dried fruits, pistachios, almonds, etc., skins, leather, furs, natural gums, printed calico (qalamkar), silk, opium, and so forth through the whole gamut of Iranian exportable commodities (excluding oil). But the emphasis, rather cunning, on the desire for closer ties with the United States which would continue after war; the effort put by Iranian officials, laziness and apathy dispelled, into drafting a carefully constructed Trade Agreement; and the nervousness whereby Ministers betrayed that the Shah from his palace was pressing them to get the United States to come to a definite agreement, all prove that the political motivation was at least as strong in moving the Persian Government as any commercial or financial aim.

Not least important in Iran's requirements from America were the bombers and pursuit planes. Reza Shah knew already that he would probably in the end see his country invaded. The negotiations with America, although providing a very significant illustration of how Iranians could fail to grasp, or deliberately blind themselves to, the attitude of others, nevertheless afford a chapter in recent Iranian history of highly pertinent and positive action. It may have come too late, but it gives the lie to the theory that Iran is a passive nation. While the United States Government held meetings with the anxious Iranian Minister in Washington and cautioned its own Minister in Tehran on how to answer repeated Iranian requests for planes, a loan, or a Trade Agreement, the Iranian Government was desperately trying to escape imminent attack from Russia; to find in the support of the great Democracy a means of preserving its neutrality and economic survival.

America was in a most difficult position; her planes were earmarked for Britain; her own supplies of copper and aluminium too low to admit of export – but, had her Government been able positively to meet Iran's wishes, the necessity of the Russian and British invasion of 1941 might have been obviated. With close commercial links already forged between the United States and Iran, it would, a short time later, have been a small step to arranging for the transmission of supplies, of American origin, to Russia through Iran. As for the Germans in Iran, the United States would have been in a position, as a partner of Iran's, to press home the necessity for their departure, internment or whatever.

By the summer of 1941 the British Ambassador in Washington had to intervene to ensure that planes were in no circumstances exported to Iran. The danger of their ultimately falling into enemy hands had

by that time seriously to be contemplated, as the risk of a German breakthrough in the Caucasus began to present itself as a definite possibility. In any event, the United States representative in Iraq could, on 28th July, indicate that some form of British entrance into Iran was apparently already being considered. America had not been turned to in time. When turned to, she could not save the day for Reza Shah's Persia; but what has been discussed in this chapter provides a preface, perhaps in danger of being forgotten, to the Shah's message of 25th August 1941 to President Roosevelt, begging him 'to take efficacious and urgent humanitarian steps to put an end to these acts of aggression' [on the part of Russia and Great Britain].

It also affords an interesting introduction to the explanation of subsequent Iranian business trends, when, under the New Freedom which succeeded Reza Shah's New Order, Iranian businessmen began tasting the joys of private enterprise. Ironically it was an American, Dr. Millspaugh, who was to receive the worst mauling in the *mêlée* that ensued from 1943 onwards, when nascent private enterprise felt itself again threatened by a too rigorous Government control of economic and commercial activity. In a sense much of the subsequent history of Iran is to do with this conflict between Government control and private enterprise; but it was odd that one of the early victims in the struggle should be an American financial and economic adviser, when the original failure of Iran and America to come together had been partly due to the impracticability of a state-controlled economy becoming geared to a free-enterprise commercial power.

Chapter 21

Preface to the New Freedom

THE immediate effect of the Russo-British intervention in 1941 in Iran was the termination of Reza Shah's programme of reform and of his totalitarian regime. Thus Iran once again had the opportunity of experimenting in democracy. This meant risking the danger of revived self-expression from different sectors of a heterogeneous and civically unco-ordinated society. While Reza Shah, the band master, had held the baton, drums which could not follow his beat had been muted by the awe he inspired, and the only sound heard was of those who had been able to play safely under his direction. When the baton fell from his grasp and he disappeared from the scene, to use an expression familiar to speakers of the Persian language, each man felt himself again free to beat his own little drum; or at least, to beat it in tune with whichever factional leader he chose temporarily to follow.

It is a paradox typical of the Iranian situation that freedom should have been ushered in with a foreign Occupation. When the new Shah took the oath of office as Muhammad Reza Pahlavi on 17th September 1941, British and Russian troops were on Persian soil. This oath of office is set out in Article 39 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law of 1907 and may be translated as follows:

> 'I call upon God Almighty as witness, and I swear upon the Quran and upon all that is respected by God to use the best of my power for the preservation of the independence of Iran and to defend the frontiers of the country and the rights of the nation, to be the guardian of the Constitutional Law of Iran and to rule according to it and the established laws, and to endeavour to protect the Ja'fariya religion, and in all that I do to remember God, and not to consider anything but the happiness and greatness of the state and nation of Iran. And I seek the aid of God, who helps mankind, to serve the progress of Iran. I seek the help of the souls of the great Masters of Islam.'

It will be noted that this oath affords the Sovereign wide scope, especially in making him the guardian of the Constitution. Notice-

able also is its emphasis on the religious background. There is the reference to the Ja'fariya sect of the Shi'ite division of Islam, the sect to which the majority of Iranians subscribe. There is also the reference to the souls of the saints and martyrs, 'Ali and his descendants, Husain and Hasan, and the other Imams, down to the 12th who went into concealment and will, the devout believe, return to inaugurate the millennium.

The young man suddenly deprived of the chance of seeing his father again and suddenly seated on the throne was twenty-two years of age. After going through the curriculum of Iranian schools, in 1931 he had been sent to Switzerland to complete his education at Le Rosey School in Rolle. Reports on him while at Le Rosey indicate that he was good at games and of a friendly, affectionate but earnest disposition. A Persian tutor taught him Persian. The young Prince also learnt European languages. In later years he seems to have acquired the habit of that rapid, intensive reading, quickly assimilated, a trait ascribed to an autocratic Louis of France, a minutely despotic Philip of Spain, and to other men called to high office who have concentrated upon their duties with self-conscious seriousness and a sense of ineluctable mission. Although much of the foreign journalistic material which he sees has obviously to be presented to him in the form of cuttings and précis, nevertheless the Shah's awareness of foreigners' comments on his country and himself has caused more than one foreign envoy surprise. He is a fluent talker and, it may be said, no mean actor. He possesses a strong sense of the power of words and the same sense as his countrymen of the importance of gesture. Hence he leaves the statesmen and ambassadors of foreign countries with few verbal or rhetorical advantages; and he sometimes impresses very important people rather more than perhaps their better informed subordinates consider desirable.

In other words the Shah possesses to a marked degree the kind of intelligence, verbal facility and keen eye for a useful opportunity which are characteristic of his people. From this it follows that he most thoroughly knows the nature of his compatriots and upon this knowledge rests to a considerable degree his remarkable survival as Shah. A portion of the resentment against him might be attributable to his shrewd perception of how the pieces lie on the Persian chequerboard and of what future moves can be anticipated. This arouses resentment because many would prefer the occupant of the throne to be less difficult to dupe. Throughout at least two-thirds of his reign up to date, certainly until the fall of Prime Minister Musaddiq in the summer of 1953, His Imperial Majesty has had to be, or, depending upon circumstances, chosen to be an onlooker rather than

participant in the game. In recent years, however, after over twenty years of watching the play, with its base and minority objectives and the repetition of old gambits, signs have emerged of his boredom and disgust. Beginning in 1961 he has initiated a series of moves himself, destined to summon the mass of his subjects closer to him. This kind of initiative has been embarked upon before in Iranian history by rulers seeking to appeal directly to the people over the heads of an élite striving to hedge the Throne. Such an appeal from the wearer of the diadem raises popular hopes, but in a state where groups are in delicate balance with each other there is a limit to how far the ruler can proceed in appealing to one group, however numerous, to the detriment of others. If this limit is overstepped deposition of the ruler becomes a formidable possibility: other groups do not remain passive observers of the Crown's overtures to rival elements.

When his son and heir returned from Switzerland, Reza Shah arranged for him to have two years' military training. He also took steps to introduce him to government procedures. This training was abruptly interrupted in August 1941. The loneliness of kings is always frightening to behold and never more so than when they are young, comparatively inexperienced and forced by circumstances to finish an apprenticeship on their own, after the untimely withdrawal of the master. Muhammad Reza Pahlavi's initial years as Shah were further complicated by the fact that his predecessor's one-man rule had left no young statesmen ready to share the burden of government with his son.

In contemplating the solitude of a young man suddenly called to the exigent office of being Shahanshah of Iran, the tendency is naturally to turn to his private associates, especially after discovering that he had no counsellors upon whom he could unreservedly rely in his public function. A noble consort might have been of value. Queen Fawzia was Cairene, of mixed Turkish and Albanian descent. She was strikingly beautiful and has always been legitimately considered remarkably shrewd, but she was contemptuous of Tehran and its Court. Up to 1941 only a daughter, a loved daughter, but not the boon a new dynasty above all desires, had been the fruit of the marriage. As the years went by the King of Egypt's sister gave her husband neither a brother nor a sister for Princess Shahnaz, and eventually she left for her Cairo, not to return. The marriage was dissolved in 1948.

The position so far as other members of the royal family was concerned was far from easy. Natural affection and family loyalty in royal families are usually the more intense because of royalty's isolation, shared memories and, above all, shared apprehensions. This

affection and loyalty have had to contend in the Shah's heart with anxiety over the conduct of those most closely connected with him, and the contumacy of those people who are alone privileged to exercise over him the influence of subtle familiar emotions. It might be said that his capacity to command can be illustrated in the extent to which he has succeeded in controlling a family as diverse and refractory on a small scale as his nation is on a larger one.

Reza Shah certainly had the power 'to subdue and overawe' others by subjecting their wills. His son had the additional disadvantage of being Richard to this Oliver. He had to reassemble an idea of power in the public mind after power had once again become dispersed; but piecing it together a second time, though it would take years and require great delicacy, was a realisable aim. Also from 1941 until the Russians finally left the country in the spring of 1946, the Shah could hardly be master in his own house, even had those who were enjoying a new found freedom intended that his mastery should in any sense be real. During the War he appeared to many foreign observers to count for very little until, by identifying himself with the Army, he began to emerge as a more clearly defined, potentially dominant figure.

For the first five years of his reign he had plenty of occasion to watch events and very little to influence them. In 1963, however, it was possible to observe that the process of reassembling the idea of a royal power in Iran had advanced a long way. It had advanced so far that the time seemed to be at hand when a new, planned and deliberate distribution of power was feasible. In 1941 political power was suddenly let loose like mercury, scattered in drops and in danger of being abused and going to waste. The new Shah does not appear ever to have thought in terms of gathering the supreme power into his own hands, to hold it alone to the end of his reign. As American diplomatic observers commented very early, he had been brought up in a far more liberal school than his father. In his first broadcast to his people he said what he has often repeated since, 'the form of government conducive to national unity and progress is a democratic government'. On the other hand he has been too conscientious and too conversant with Iranian conditions to lend himself to letting power remain in danger of licentious misuse. He is not an irresponsible man and his oath binds him to preserve Iran's independence; Iran's geographical position means that if political power ceases to be concentrated and effective, the country's independence is jeopardised. It may therefore be postulated that Muhammad Reza Pahlavi has always been conscious of the need of a fresh concentration of political power, if only as a prelude to a fresh delegation of it.

Muhammad Reza Shah's enemies may be found in the following classes of society: politicians, capitalists, merchants, land-owners, intellectuals and students. By his second marriage, to Queen Soraya, the daughter of a tribal notable, he effected an alliance with at least one powerful tribal element. Although his relations with another powerful tribal force, the Qashgha'is, have never been at all good, it is not among the tribes that strong opposition to him has been shown, and the list of classes given above shows that his opponents do not include the class of cultivators or the lower middle and urban working classes.

It will be noted that in the above list politicians and capitalists are put together. This is because in the fluidity characteristic of Iranian groupings these two groups are very often either one and the same or in close association. Association between capitalists and politicians depends on the power of the latter to assist the former in achieving commercial scoops. The type of capitalist who emerged after Reza Shah's abdication is always seeking the quickest and easiest way of getting richer, and it will be necessary in the course of the next chapter to deal at some length with this comparatively new class, and to show how the nucleus of their wealth came to be derived during the occupation of Iran by foreign armies in the Second World War. This class has to be differentiated from the merchants, who represent one of the most ancient classes and whose antipathy to the Shah is of a different and less flexible order: it is coloured by religious and conservative sentiments and influenced by the old bazaar merchant's perennial desire for security and for scope to operate in an individualistic, discrete manner; this scope is limited only by the relatively narrow regulations of his own trade and social group and he desires it to be unhampered to the greatest possible extent by government interference.

Of the Shah's relations with the landed proprietors more will be said in connection with his land reform programme. Another class inimical to the Throne which must now be mentioned is that of the students.

Broadly speaking this class has emerged since the fall in August 1953 of Muhammad Musaddiq. It is particularly active among the large numbers of Iranian students abroad, in Europe and the United States. Their antagonism to the Throne is undoubtedly manipulated by a few senior intellectuals, but nevertheless contains elements of spontaneity. Dissatisfied and frightened young people, who have never been conditioned to suppose that the seat of their ills may lie in their own deficiencies, seek a scapegoat, conveniently provided by the monarch. The student opposition to the King has so far proved implacable.

Opposition from politicians and entrepreneurs not surprisingly depends on the degree of frustration they happen to feel at any given time. They can be won over by hopes of preferment and opportunity.

People who have changed their minds about the Shah after objective study of his conduct throughout his reign are few, as may be expected in a society whose political judgments are subjective rather than objective, emotional rather than rational. But in assessing types and degrees of antipathy to the Shah it should be added that he has unfortunately committed acts and chosen subordinates in a way which has only served to deepen rancour against him. The rancour is compounded of the dangerous and volatile mixture of patriotism, often virtuous but not always sound, and jealousy, the spiteful product of frustration and a sense of impotence. In both the jealousy of the self-interested and the patriotism of the deluded there is little possibility of genuine changes of opinion in the Shah's favour. He will always have to guard against a strangely assorted but, fortunately for him, disunited opposition.

In a sense the times are against him. Kings are no longer in fashion. Forces opposed to the Shah can still be inflamed by slogans about despotism, unconstitutionalism, the anachronism of monarchy. He has had to bear taunts of failing to abide by the Constitution and yet he abode by it until he found it an insuperable barrier to reform because beneath the shelter of the Constitution the Iranian Majlis, packed with the men most opposed to reform, showed itself incapable of accepting the very reforms it, as the darling child of the Constitutional Movement, should have been originating. Consequently in 1961 the Majlis was suspended. An unconstitutional form of government operated until the autumn of 1963 in an effort to give the Shah a breathing space in which to attempt to prepare the ground for the resuscitation of the Constitution – in circumstances in which it might function properly for the benefit of the majority of the people instead of a disparate conglomeration of minorities. Whatever practice has been, in theory until three years ago the Shah attempted always to reign constitutionally. In practice he has made himself increasingly more responsible for what happened than under a constitution he theoretically ought to have done. As it became evident that nobody else would act with the requisite degree of responsibility, this royal assumption of responsibility might appear to have been inevitable.

Again the presence of the Allies during the first five years of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi's reign should be remembered. So long as they were in Iran, however much they might protest the desire not

to interfere, the political activity of every Iranian was inevitably curtailed. Iranian political responsibility was limited by their presence and their requirements. They demanded efficient communications, tolerable working and living conditions for their troops and locally employed workers and above all, something resembling a stable and, if possible, easily influenced government.

The British were particularly concerned to ensure stable government; the Americans, anxious that in no circumstances should supplies to Russia through the Iranian transport system be interrupted, were hardly less concerned. The Russians wanted to ensure that supplies should reach them through an Iran at least tranquil enough to make this possible. At the same time they wanted to ensure that the central government should not again become as strong as it had been under Reza Shah. For them the ideal Iranian Government was one which contained a predominance of easily soluble components in the event of the U.S.S.R. deciding ultimately to liquidate or at least diminish Iran's independence at a later period.

The diminution of Iranian political responsibility occasioned by the presence of foreign powers followed the experience of Anglo-Russian domination at the end of the nineteenth century and for the first twenty years of this century. Too little time had elapsed for old habits and attitudes to have been forgotten, so that ways of making the best of such a situation could once again quickly be resorted to. This meant that individuals who had had practice in using the name of foreign powers for the promotion of private ends were in a position to take advantage of the new conditions. Most of the men who participated in the numerous cabinets between 1941 and 1946 were over sixty years of age and came into the category of those who had received all their political conditioning and learnt their adroitness during the earlier years of the century, when England and Russia were dominant. Moreover, as they were acquainted with the foreigners and were often the only people to whom the foreigners could turn in the quest for co-operation, it was inevitable that they should rapidly acquire influence after Reza Shah's fall. The new Shah himself was forced to confer with men thought to have access to the British and Russians. Needless to say these men, whom the chauvinistic Reza Shah had suspected and suppressed, were not loath to come forward and profit from the new situation. The Shah could not dispense with them so long as the Allies were present. But at the same time neither he nor the vast majority of other politically conscious Iranians could ever trust men who, by virtue of the very relations with foreigners which gave them their influence, were inevitably suspected of being potentially traitors.

The Shah, therefore, cannot be blamed either for bringing these politicians back into power after his father's departure, or for seeking gradually to reduce their field of action. In doing the latter he could be charged with acting unconstitutionally; he was assuming more responsibility than a constitutional monarch should have done. But if he considered that responsibility in the hands of possible traitors would jeopardise the independence of Iran, then by restricting the activities of some of his politicians at least he was honestly endeavouring to fulfil one condition of his oath to his people. In fact it seems clear that he honestly wanted to keep within the bounds of the Constitution and the length of time from 1941 to 1953, during which the politicians had numerous chances to govern, indicates the extent of the Shah's reluctance entirely to supplant the Constitution with direct rule from the Throne.

Chapter 22

An Experiment in Democracy

FOUR months elapsed after the British and Russian intervention before the position was clarified by the conclusion, on 29th January 1942, of a Tripartite Treaty of Alliance. Calling this arrangement an alliance was more courteous than truthful. Iran's positive role was distinctly limited. Iran, and especially the Majlis, had been anxious to make sure that it would not be called upon to pass under arms in the Allies' cause. Expectation of a German victory was still widespread and Iranians had no desire to be made to fight on the wrong side. The Allies undertook Iran's defence against German aggression and aggression from any other power. The Shah on his part contracted to co-operate to the utmost of his ability, but the operations of his military forces were restricted to maintaining internal security and confined to Iranian soil. Hopes of a German victory, that influenced this Iranian desire not to be a fighting partner, considered only one possible outcome of the War, while sentencing Iran to be the passive partner, in the Tripartite Treaty and, for the second time in recent history, to have little right to a voice in post-war peace conferences.

In the Second World War, however, the guarantee of the interests of smaller nations provided by the Atlantic Charter, promulgated by President Roosevelt and Mr. Winston Churchill on 14th August 1941, seemed to afford Iran protection. It is significant that only three days after signing the Tripartite Treaty the Shah informed the American President of Iran's complete agreement with the principles of the Charter and desire to benefit from them 'on a footing of equality with other nations'. His Government, however, failed to persuade the United States to make a special declaration of its concern for Iran's rights, but the principles of the Atlantic Charter were again specifically invoked in the last paragraph of the Three Powers' 'Declaration Regarding Iran', signed by Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin at the end of their meeting at Tehran on 1st December 1943.

In 1943 it was beginning to look more likely that victory would go to the Allies. Iranian procrastination in 1941 after the arrival of

the Russians and British, notably in the matter of the presence of Germans which had precipitated the intervention, indicated the strength of the belief in a German victory, probably in the near future. This delay in carrying out the Allies' demands for the expulsion or handing over of German residents in Iran meant that two or three of the most dangerous Nazi agitators were able to make good their escape.

By the end of 1943 German reverses quickened Iranian apprehensions of a future again dominated by the Russians and British; it was imperative for the Iranian Government somehow to involve the United States in the preservation of its rights, preferably in some kind of international statement on Iran's future independence.

The Iranian memorandum on the subject, presented to the American Minister in Tehran, Mr. Dreyfus, and to Mr. Molotov and Mr. Eden, had twice mentioned, in addition to emphasising hopes that Iranian independence would be respected and control of essential services rapidly returned to the Government, the country's economic plight and need for succour, and this, besides reiterating respect for Iran's integrity and independence, the Declaration of 1943 specifically promised.

In December 1942, when the United States sent in forces to operate the southern section of the Trans-Iranian Railway, the Shah's Government asked that the presence of these forces should be regularised by some kind of agreement between Iran and the United States. The United States was unwilling to be committed in this way. Mr. Cordell Hull telegraphed to the United States Minister on 23rd December 1942 that the '(State) Department would prefer not to conclude any general, overall agreement covering the presence of American armed forces in Iran . . .'[1] Details were instead to be taken care of by the same kind of *ad hoc* arrangements in force for American troops in Egypt. Hence the importance it can be supposed the Iranians attached to their minor diplomatic *coup* of getting the Three Power Declaration signed on 1st December in the following year. Admittedly some declaration of the kind had been in the minds of the British. After all the British were as alert to the Russian threat as were Iranians; Iranian forebodings arose from a drama in which the British had also been deeply involved from the beginning. Admittedly, M. Soheily, the Persian Prime Minister, called first on Mr. Eden and told the United States officials he later visited that Mr. Eden approved the idea of the Declaration in principle and had suggested immediate reference to the other two powers whose leaders were then in Tehran. None the less, from the Iranian point of

[1] *Foreign Relations*, 1942, Vol. IV, p. 316.

view, the Declaration's most signal feature was the writing into it of America's interest in Iran's fate; the appending to it of the signature of the President of the United States. There was moveover no small effort, willingly supported by the Americans, to make the Declaration appear largely American-inspired, and the President's team of advisers certainly took the matter up from the outset with considerable verve.

To go back to the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance between Iran, Great Britain and Russia, on a matter of profound concern to the Iranians it stipulated that Allied forces should be withdrawn 'not later than six months' after the end of hostilities in all theatres.[1] Article 7 contained the Russo-British undertaking to 'use their best endeavours to safeguard the economic existence of the Iranian people against the privations and difficulties arising as a result of the present war', but for the rest the Treaty gave little to Iran. It appears to have been drafted to contain all the necessary handles for diplomatic pressure in the event of Iran's failure to co-operate over the operations in what Churchill had described to Stalin as a 'through route to you which cannot be broken'. Meanwhile questions of the two powers' financial obligations to Iran were left to be covered by separate agreements. Iran was to assist in every possible way in obtaining material and recruiting labour for the maintenance of the supply route to Russia, and such measures of censorship as the Allies thought necessary were to be supported by the Iranian Government. American reluctance either to subscribe to this Treaty at a later date when American forces came to Iran, or to enter into a similar treaty arrangement directly with the Iranians, may be ascribed to unwillingness either to be linked too closely with the British and Russians in Iranian affairs, or to be treated on the same footing as they were. Above all the Americans desired to avoid the obloquy and suspicion which were attached to the names of the other two powers.

Economic privation was evident as soon as the Russians and British entered the country. British soldiers were appalled by what they saw in villages in Western Persia and distributed grain to some of the starving people. The fact is that Reza Shah's Government had seriously overstretched itself in the realms of economics and finance and the War had strained it beyond endurance already, before the Allies entered the country. His State Monopoly system, by which grain prices were fixed by the Government, the sole purchaser, had resulted, although prices had eventually been raised, in the pro-

[1] For a full text see J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, Princeton, etc., 1956, pp. 232–234.

ducers not being able to cover their costs. Incentive to cultivation and harvesting had waned accordingly; and the country was also over-taxed. Naturally, when the invasion occurred, there was considerable incentive to hoarding against the large profits that might be made out of the heavy food demands arising from the influx of foreign troops. In any event, on his fall Reza Shah's system of collection could be expected to break down: men withheld stocks and waited to see what was going to happen.

Hoarding is a vice to which many observers, especially the British, were very much prone to ascribe Iran's economic ills. The British seem to have entertained the lowest possible opinion of Persian virtue, and the liveliest suspicions of Persian cupidity. But in addition to hoarding there were other factors at work. Bad harvests for one and hesitant, skimped sowing by cultivators short of capital for seed and strongly affected by the uncertainty resulting from the invasion, for another. Somewhat later, as the food crisis assumed more alarming dimensions, American diplomatic observers were able to produce proof that the charges of hoarding were exaggerated.[1] Dreyfus in a telegram dated 17th July 1942 asserts that Iranian denials of hoarding have 'been proved substantially correct by recent investigations which failed to reveal large stocks in hands of persons designated by the British'. Dreyfus seems generally speaking to have been conspicuously fair in his judgment, although, particularly at this stage, he bitterly criticises some aspects of British official conduct. Undoubtedly there were hoarders in Iran, many of them, as it happened, protégés of the British and therefore in a powerful position; but British judgments may have been over-generalised and were certainly conditioned by a prevailing low opinion of Iranian probity.

The combination of factors present in the early days of the Occupation rapidly produced famine. Russian reluctance ot permit the flow of wheat from the fertile areas of the north and northwest, whence the capital was normally supplied, aggravated the situation. Thus the Russians could turn the situation to use both for propaganda and for political ends. So far as the latter were concerned, failure to provide bread for the people lessened the reputations of Prime Ministers and promoted instability generally. For propaganda purposes few things could be better than a sudden release of wheat, bruited in all newspapers, when the people of the capital and other large cities had touched the verge of starvation. Such a gesture could be the more effective since the Russians had gained control of a section of the Press. It must also be remembered, however, that in 1942 Russia itself needed as much wheat as it could lay hands on and the

[1] *Foreign Relations*, 1942, Vol. IV, p. 143.

withholding of supplies from the north of Iran was not entirely due to political and propaganda motives. Forces seemed to be diabolically conspiring in Russia's favour; anxiety over wheat for the U.S.S.R. could be translated into positive action in Iran, first to fan instability there, then to parade Russian magnanimity when a puny supply of Iran's own wheat was allowed to reach Iran's starving capital.

The situation concerned the United States deeply. Her representatives in Iran and eastern Turkey closely watched Soviet policies in the northern parts of Iran from the moment the Russians entered the country. They were soon aware of Russian encouragement of separatist factions in Azerbaijan. This province borders Russian Azerbaijan and from there the appeal of Armenian fraternity was deliberately excited in the hearts of Armenians on the Iranian side of the border. It was because of United States pressure that the British took this matter up with the Soviet Government.

American awareness of Russian attitudes and activities increased the United States' anxiety to meet Iranian demands for cereals. These demands were repeated throughout 1942 with mounting insistence, the Iranian Minister in Washington and his Government in Tehran pleading with the United States to alleviate their country's need.

The United States was anxious to counterbalance and if possible neutralise Russian tactics, but more important was its determination to ensure the forwarding of supplies to Russia; the fight against the Nazis must not in any way be impeded by instability along the Iranian supply corridor. It was therefore considered essential to have Persian Governments in office long enough to achieve some measure of political tranquillity and administrative programming. Ahmad Qavam, Qavamu's-Saltanah, was Prime Minister in 1942 and, no doubt justly, at that time considered by the Americans one of Iran's finest statesmen. But his merits apart, it was thought essential that there should be no lapse into repeated changes of government; the threat to his position posed by the famine was deemed very serious. Also, the United States, besides being actuated by humanitarian considerations, was anxious to strengthen its position in Iran with a view to post-war developments. For this reason it was felt that every effort should be made to exploit and improve Iranian goodwill towards America. America therefore listened with much sympathy to Iran's requests for wheat and lost no time in making strenuous attempts to supply it. On one occasion the Americans got out of step with the British in an attempt to get an emergency supply into Persia from India.

Both the United States and Great Britain were faced with inordinate demands on shipping space. Transportation of goods to Iran and their clearance at the few usable ports in the south were geared to the primary objective of supplying Russia. This had already affected the Iranian food situation, another factor being the heavy claim made on transport by the major task of supplying Russia with war materials. Thus Iranian domestic requirements had first of all to take their place among many pressing wartime priorities; secondly, even when they had at last reached Khurramshahr or Bandar Shahpur, goods for local consumption were not necessarily given a high priority for clearing. Russia was, after all, engaged in a life-and-death struggle upon which the fate of the free world then seemed to hinge. In 1942 it was not at all easy to convey wheat to Iran over long and dangerous sea-routes. Nor was it easy for a nation neither psychologically nor physically engaged directly in the fighting to extend its strikingly unnautical understanding to embrace the West's enormous logistics problems on the high seas.

It was early agreed by Britain and America that Iranian supplies should be co-ordinated with the over-all economic planning for the Middle East worked out by the Middle East Supply Centre. This ensured Iranian consignments taking their turn among a host of other consignments, graded according to necessity and urgency for allocation of shipping and port facilities. Failure to observe priorities in any single case, however exceptional, would have wrecked the whole basis of the MESC's operations. This remarkable organisation was established to keep Middle Eastern trade and economics going without hindering the central war effort. With its headquarters at Cairo, the MESC had to sift the import demands of different Middle Eastern countries, cut them down to essentials and then arrange for manufacture, supply and shipping in relation to all other calls, military and civil, European and Asiatic. Speedy comprehension of the Middle East's economic conditions was necessary to gauge the bases upon which the area's economic health could be maintained. From the beginning American liaison officers had been close to the MESC's activities and it was not long before United States officials were appointed to the Centre. In Cairo there was no lack of Anglo-American co-operation.

In Iran, however, for a time there was. An organisation called the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation had come to Iran before the Russo-British intervention. Its original purpose had been to arrange for the purchase of certain essential commodities. After August 1941 it assumed the far-reaching responsibility of organising the road-transport service. It hired practically half Iran's total lorry

assets of four thousand vehicles and pressed this fleet into service until more lorries could be obtained through Lend-Lease. The British, not unwarrantably in the circumstances, insisted that all imports of vehicle parts including tyres should be handled throughout by the UKCC. This seems to have irked the Americans, who probably sensed a tendency on the part of UKCC officials to lay the foundations of a future market in Iran for British motors. Before the War Iran was chiefly supplied by United States manufacturers. As the United States had to help in the supply of tyres, urgently wanted because inferior roads made the turn-over of tyres excessive, the United States was inevitably closely involved in the UKCC's activities. Also the United States was already at the beginning of 1942 thinking in terms of greater co-ordination and control of Iranian finance and economics. It was believed that only in this way could stability be achieved, and the Americans believed that, having supplied Iran with two financial advisers in the past and being unencumbered with the Russo-British weight of Iranian suspicion and ill-will, it was up to them to take the lead in Iran's financial and economic reorganisation. To this British officials in London, at least, do not seem to have demurred. London in fact, by the end of the year, was urging Washington to make haste in sending out what in the end became the second Millspaugh Financial Mission to Iran.

Earlier in 1942, however, Anglo-American relations in Tehran were severely strained and chiefly over what was regarded by the Americans as the UKCC's intransigence in the matter of tyres and vehicle allocations; while the British Legation's manner of dealing with Iranians was considered unnecessarily harsh. Behind American criticism of the British lay American concern at the worsening of Anglo-Iranian relations: if the supply route to Russia was to function unimpeded, it was essential that the Iranians should not be goaded into serious resistance. Yet the British acted as they did because of the belief that it was equally essential, for the same purpose, that the Iranian authorities should not be allowed to get out of hand.

Part of the trouble was undoubtedly the insufficient staff of the UKCC in the early days of the occupation, when a relatively unimportant and under-staffed organisation was suddenly entrusted with a portion of the inter-allied war effort of the greatest magnitude and delicacy. A stronger man was brought out to head the UKCC and at once began to improve his organisation's relations with both the Iranian Government and the United States Legation. Meanwhile the black market continued to grow until tyres stolen from UKCC stores were fetching, it was reported, as much as £150 for a passenger car

tyre and £450 for a single lorry tyre.[1] This fact is relevant to British 'intransigence' as well as to the question of the demoralising effect on Iran of war-time conditions. Eventually, in November 1942, the British Army took over the direction of road transport services and the UKCC was relieved of this huge task.

Shortage of bread in the capital grew worse. Related to the British difficulties with the Iranians over, on a relatively minor scale, tyre and vehicle distribution and, on a major scale, currency, there was some delay in forwarding to stricken cities wheat supplies that had already reached the country. Sad to relate the question of supplying wheat to tide Iran over until the 1943 harvest became bound up with the gravest of all crises in Irano-British relations in 1942–3, the crisis over currency releases to meet the British requirements for payment of locally employed labour and British troops. At the bottom of this protracted struggle, a struggle in which the British appear to have felt reluctantly compelled to employ economic pressure as well as, ultimately, a mild military threat, lay the Iranian Majlis. Before speaking further of the currency crisis, of the tacking from one side to the other of the Iranian Prime Minister, of American attitudes, British persistence and so on, it is necessary to look at the new freedom vociferously manifested in the activities of the Majlis, and in the proliferation of political parties.

For the politicians, self-seekers and men of ideals alike, Reza Shah's abdication, announced in the Majlis on the morning of 16th September 1941, meant the possibility of revival of Parliamentary activity. The British had been preparing the way in broadcasts from London and Delhi aimed to present the old Shah to his people as an avaricious and stupid dictator who had deprived them of liberty and stolen their possessions. He alone was made responsible for Iran's plight; Churchill went so far as to speak of bringing his 'misgovernment of his people' to account. This was on 3rd September,[2] when the Shah and his 'Nazi-like' government continued to prevaricate over the question of expelling or handing over suspected Germans.

The Allies were not desirous that all the Germans should be allowed to depart in peace and considerable difficulty and delay was being experienced over getting hold of those whom Great Britain and Russia wanted. Accordingly it was decided to make a joint Russo-British march on Tehran, troops occupying the suburbs but not

[1] George Kirk, *The Middle East in the War*, Survey of International Affairs 1939–46, n. p. 149.

[2] Churchill's telegram to the British Minister in Tehran, *The Second World War*, London, 1948–52, Vol. III, p. 430.

entering the city itself. The simultaneous entry by the two powers was to be on 17th September, hence the Shah's abdication the day before. He went first to Isfahan and after making arrangements about his property left that city under British escort for Mauritius. As we have seen, he had wanted to land in India, but this was prevented; he was not even allowed ashore in Bombay. He had also hoped, it appears, to go to Japan, or at least to visit it while taking the Far Eastern route to South America. The British, however, made the decision about his destination their own. He died in Johannesburg on 26th July 1944, a sad and, if a photograph taken of him shortly before death does not lie, broken old man.

The urgency of the situation had prompted some B.B.C. broadcasts, apparently designed to bolster Constitutionalism and assist in the Shah's undoing. Those whom he had frustrated, robbed or bullied no doubt saw nothing wrong in this piece of war-time propaganda at the moment of Reza Shah's general defeat and humiliation, but for the future it laid up more fuel for the smouldering compost heap of Persian bitterness against the British Government. Enmity against an old Shah wears away, while insults to the ruler of the Iranian people ultimately go down in history as insults to the nation itself.

By the end of September 1941, the British had collected about four hundred German suspects, who were sent to Australia and interned. Some sixty were handed over to the Russians. The Nazi organisation had continued working among the Germans who had collected in the grounds of their Legation, Erwin Ettel, the German Minister, being himself an experienced and senior party man. To spare trained and important Nazis falling into the hands of the Allies, particularly the Russians, he and his staff had endeavoured to substitute men of less importance for some of those whom the Russians and British had named. One unfortunate Technical College instructor, whose name happened to be the same as that of a Nazi agent who had been operating in Gilan, thus very nearly found himself being handed over to the Soviet officials. He managed to avoid this and went with the others into the more douce British custody; and to Australia where, like a number of his compatriots, he has since made his career. His case was typical; his wife and small children were separated from him and sent to Germany through Turkey. They were robbed of all but the clothes they stood up in by Russian guards at the Turkish-Iranian frontier.

Due to the delaying tactics adopted by the German Legation and assisted by Iranian authorities between August and September, two of the most dangerous Nazi agents, Roman Gamotta and Franz

Mayr, managed to make a getaway. Mayr was not caught until 15th August 1943.

The Majlis consisted of Deputies who had been selected for election before Reza Shah's end, but with him gone it certainly had no intention of being a rubber-stamp Parliament. The Majlis had not been able to operate effectively for any appreciable length of time since the closure of Parliament over the Shuster Affair in 1911. One of its last notable acts had been to vote Reza Shah sovereign. In 1941 politicians saw the way open to a revival of the Majlis's power. The new Shah was weak. The Allies, especially the British, to destroy the old king, had used propaganda about the dictatorial government of Reza Shah and the necessity of restoring constitutional rule. Thus both British sympathy for the Constitution and the new Shah's inexperience could be exploited in an effort to concentrate power once and for all in the Majlis. Control of the choice of Prime Ministers and taking strong action on financial issues were the means adopted by the Majlis to make itself powerful. Democracy was so much the fashion that Ahmad Qavam reminded the United States Government twice during negotiations for the American Financial Mission under Dr. Millspaugh that Millspaugh's powers would be less than when he was head of a similar mission between 1922 and 1927, because of the 'present democratic form of government.'[1]

The extent to which the Majlis succeeded in just over a year in becoming a formidable force is shown by a comment of this kind, made by the then Prime Minister in the summer of 1942. The Majlis's determination to retain control of financial matters – as indeed it is empowered to do by the Fundamental Law and, as will be recalled, the Majlis was anxious to do immediately after the Constitution had been granted – is shown by what subsequently happened to the Second Millspaugh Mission. Having taken up his duties in 1943 Dr. Millspaugh endured appalling abuse and every conceivable kind of obstruction until he had to resign in February 1945, two years almost to the month after his arrival. His book, *Americans in Persia*,[2] describes his ordeal. It was the ordeal of a man who tried to institute organisation and centralisation in Iranian fiscal affairs just at a moment when, wearied of the restraints of Reza Shah's reign and bent on enjoying private enterprise, influential Iranians would brook no restoration of Government 'dictatorship'; Millspaugh came to be caricatured as a dictator.

What was happening was that the Majlis's constitutional powers

[1] *Foreign Relations*, ibid., p. 238.

[2] Arthur C. Millspaugh, *Americans in Persia*, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 1946.

to check the country's finances were being invoked by a new class of capitalists then struggling to emerge. This class was strong in the Majlis and those members who were not themselves engaged in making profits out of the opportunities provided by the Occupation were none the less generally ready to be the tools of people outside the Assembly who were. The new freedom was being exploited to provide opportunities for a group of men to make themselves very rich. Greed for money was coupled with jealous retention of the freedom to make it; under Reza Shah only the Government, which came in effect to mean only the Shah, had been able to get rich. Reza Shah's example had been studied and his power deeply envied. Others would now set about doing what he had done for himself; opportunities were not wanting.

The black market was one way of making money and Dr. Millspaugh earned mountains of abuse by his sorties against it; abuse was mingled with mockery of his quixotic tilting at something Iranian profiteers were determined he could not wrest from them. But in addition to the black market there were the public works which the Allies undertook.

In the winter of 1941, while strenuous efforts were being made by the British Royal Engineers to improve the Trans-Iranian railway and make it capable of carrying increased loads, road building had also to be tackled. The Royal Engineers worked in conjunction with the Danish firm known as Kampsax, which had supervised the construction of the railway and still had a base in Iran. In 1941 Kampsax was practically the only engineering firm in the country capable of embarking on extensive construction works. A total length of over three thousand miles of roads was surfaced and strengthened for lorries. For this vast and swiftly accomplished task Persian labourers were employed to the extent of 67,000 men.

Operations on this scale required the co-operation of a number of sub-contractors. The railway works had introduced Iranians to sub-contracting and to the profits it can bring the alert and mobile: mobile in the sense that participation in contracting works up and down the long routes of Persia means making speedy dashes from one part of the country to another, while at the same time keeping in touch with Tehran to receive intelligence of where works are about to begin; alert in the sense that this emergent race of public works men had to be ready at the right place at the right time to be selected by the foreign experts and allocated jobs. They would have to be acquainted with the people of different regions and be in relations with village headmen and local magnates to be able, at a moment's notice, to produce the labour and operate quarries for the materials

the foreign engineers required. They then inevitably became all-in-all to the construction engineers, supplying them with the means to accomplish the work and acting as intermediaries and interpreters between them and the local people.

Anybody with access to the British was in a favourable position to gain employment. The shrewd sons of even quite menial servitors of a foreign legation could succeed in becoming rich and influential men. Protected by foreign forces whose primary objective was carrying out major feats of engineering with the least possible delay, these sub-contractors, vendors of materials, hirers-out of vehicles, recruiters of labour and so on, were in a position to defy their own Government. This was free enterprise with a vengeance; no restrictions save those directly imposed by the Allies need be regarded at all. After Reza Shah's detailed and terrifying control of almost every aspect of life and work, and with the profits the new conditions afforded, the situation was extremely exhilarating for those who had the energy and wit to take advantage of it.

The day of the entrepreneur had come. His attitude towards his own Government, the sense that he could control the country through the Majlis, and awareness that in a country lacking modern appliances, but beginning a phase of modern development, he who owns the tractor, the bull-dozer, the crane, can be exceedingly powerful and become very rich, have had a profound effect on recent Iranian politics and the disposition of power. The entrepreneur would not tolerate Millspaugh's efforts to organise the country's wealth. In Allied attempts to control supplies and introduce rationing, in Millspaugh's administration of taxes, in all plans for centralisation and improved efficiency in the Ministries concerned with finance and commerce, the entrepreneur sensed a return to an *étatisme* that was anathema to him. His opposition to tendencies of this kind did not end with the War; the vendetta was carried on against the Plan Organisation set up to execute the first Seven Year Plan, in the fields of agricultural, industrial, mining, communications and municipal development, in February 1949. The fight was of course modified by anticipation of opportunities to participate and make profits in the Plan Organisation's operations. Either the entrepreneurs controlled the Organisation or destroyed it; it had been impossible to control Dr Millspaugh and so his Mission was destroyed.

From this it follows that further examination of Iranian conditions, from 1941 until 1964, must take into account the presence of the entrepreneur, whose tenacity and energy, power to create diversions and maintain a situation which gives him the fullest possible freedom of movement, have made him a startlingly potent force on the

Persian scene. His numbers are small, but as has been noted in the case of Reza Shah, whose example impressed the entrepreneur and gave him ideas, this can be compensated for by energy and alertness. The new class could easily handle apathetic men of inherited wealth and status, venal and passive enough to do what they are told by a relatively small group of men of determination and action.

Formation of political parties, while it appealed to young enthusiasts who wanted to achieve certain ideals, also appealed to older members of the élite, who wanted to express in tangible form the freedom of speech and association which they felt had suddenly been restored. There was also the desire to resuscitate group feeling; to regain the sense of protection which being in a group offers in a distracted society. Motives of this kind were the negative aspect in the proliferation of parties which began under the new freedom. The positive aspect only occurred when young idealists formed parties that had definite aims. One of these 'younger' parties was the *Hamrahan*, Comrades' Party, with a socialist platform, formed by the Iranian economist to whose work reference has been made,[1] Mustafa Fateh. Another was the *Azadi*, Freedom, Party, organised later, in 1945, by Dr. Hasan Arsanjani.

Of the 'older' parties, the writer and parliamentarian 'Ali Dashti's '*Adalat*, Justice, Party, founded in December 1941, might be cited. Between the two extremes, on the rightist, more conservative side of the picture, came parties of the complexion of the *Mihan Parastan*, Patriots' Party, founded by enthusiasts for educational reform and the establishment of proper professional standards, lack of which they considered one of the chief banes of the country. In this party the modern type of professional man who had begun to come forward under Reza Shah found a home, while the party leaders were older men who had been among the Iranians educated in Europe in the days before Reza Shah, but who had thrown in their lot with him and supported his early and on the whole praiseworthy reform efforts. On the left was the Tudeh Party. Perhaps the only really genuine potentially effective political organisation to develop in the war years, this will be discussed separately.

In its formation the Tudeh Party had one factor in common with several other parties: the solicitude which it enjoyed, whether desired or not, from a foreign power. As the Tudeh Party was of communist leanings, the power in question was naturally Russia. The other parties, notably Sayyid Ziau'd-Din Tabataba'i's *Iradah-ye-Milli*, National Will Party, somewhat belatedly formed in response to the challenge of the Tudeh Party, all depended in various ways, direct

[1] See page 233.

and indirect, upon the foreign powers. The two occupying powers at first looked with favour on the general idea of political parties. The British saw it as a means of establishing democracy. The Russian motivation in encouraging the Tudeh Party was, of course, based on an altogether different type of calculation. Subsequently, party groupings became a useful means of identifying various segments and attitudes among the politically articulate members of society. A man could be judged by which flock he joined. A party leader could be the intermediary between a foreign legation and those of his friends who shared his interests.

It was not until January 1942 that pro-German elements formed themselves into a party. In the absence of German diplomatic representation this was largely due to the efforts of the secret agent, Franz Mayr. The party was called the Nationalists of Iran Party, the *Milliyun-i-Iran*. It included a Cabinet Minister, three Majlis deputies, eleven generals and a number of other senior army officers. Its object was to agitate the tribes into revolt, the Kurds in the north and the west of the country, the Qashgha'i tribes and their dependents in the south. Communications were essential for such ambitious purposes and Mayr had managed to get five wireless transmitters from the Japanese Legation which, after considerable delay and opposition from the Majlis, the Iranian Government expelled, in response to strong American pressure, on 23rd April 1942. The Milliyun Party was no doubt encouraged by Japanese successes in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. It was intended to be ready to operate as soon as the German forces reached the Iranian frontier after their expected offensive in the spring of 1942 and penetration through the Caucasus. Mayr went to Isfahan to plan with the General Zahedi, the Governor General there, a revolt of the southern tribes to coincide with the arrival of the German army. Another plan the Milliyun Party discussed was the deposition of the young Shah to facilitate getting control of the country and carrying out intensive sabotage of the supply route to Russia.

German reverses at Stalingrad and al-'Alamain frightened some of the Party's adherents, one of whom showed a British Intelligence officer a suitcase of Mayr's files so that those implicated in the pro-German conspiracy became known. General Zahedi was arrested in December 1942, just at a time when the food crisis had reached a climax and American observers regarded the strained relations between the Iranian Government and the British with the gravest alarm. They considered the arrests in connection with Mayr's plot ill-timed, while the Shah was deeply perturbed and said that if the British could arrest one of his most senior officers without consulting

him and his government, they could do anything. It may be supposed that the perennial British distrust of the Persians, the belief in their incompetence, utter irresponsibility and dishonesty, ruled out such consultation at a moment when they decided that only the promptest action would prevent disorder and forestall the risk of sabotage to the supply route to Russia.[1]

With the exception of the Milliyun Party, with its pro-Axis orientation, and the Tudeh Party, most of the other parties leaned to the British and Americans. Party newspapers form part of another story. They were a manifestation of the literary freedom which accompanied revived political freedom. But the way in which newspapers shifted their allegiance, as well as the manner in which the parties themselves coalesced and split asunder, and the similarity of their slogans and platforms, all point to instability and lack of profundity in this game of political parties.

If the British had hoped at the outset that formation of parties would provide the key to groupings in the Majlis, they were doomed to disappointment; the Majlis went on its own sweet way. Parties were hardly reflected at all in its kaleidoscopic splinterings. Personal interests and personalities were what counted in that Assembly; and continued to do so until the Throne had gained in strength so that finally, after a process of being slowed down, in 1961 the National Assembly's career of freedom ground to a halt.

This absence of relationship between political parties and the Majlis addled the parties as political entities. With the exception of the Tudeh they degenerated into formations like clubs, but even so they proved too inorganic to last. The type of association the members of several of them were really seeking had little to do with practical politics. Generally speaking it was a type of group protection, in a new phase of freedom, opportunity and danger, which in the end Freemasonry seemed to some to offer better than had the 'Adalat or Mihan Parastan Party. Also, the stern activities of the Tudeh Party and the fate in store for it eventually left men of milder temperament and conservative tendencies averse to carrying a party label. The fraternity of the Lodge, with its secrecy, gave them, without the hurly-burly, what a Party had seemed to offer. In 1954–5, many of the more shadowy parties formed by conservative and professional men had dissolved. Their members joined the Freemasons and Masonry took on a new lease of life in Iran. Less conservative and more fervently nationalistic and anti-monarchical men remained adherents of the Iran Party and the National Front, which had been

[1] The U.S. G.O.C. also required arrests of railway employees, to obviate sabotage.

driven underground. Beyond these, further to the left, were the cowed and harried vestiges of the Tudeh. By 1955–6 the Tudeh leaders were either in prison, dead or abroad, while to confess sympathy for them was almost a matter of life and death and certainly carried the risk of imprisonment.

The British had a job to do in Iran between 1941 and 1945 and that job was part of the larger task of the Allies, to win the War. The Allies' victory would no doubt benefit Iran – nobody could have benefited from a Nazi victory – but the British were not in Iran for Iran's good; they were there for the good of the world. For the portion of their task which had to be carried out on Persian soil they needed Persian money, to pay for what they bought locally and to pay wages. As we have seen, financial arrangements had not been gone into in the Tripartite Treaty of January 1942 but left for separate agreements, into which the British were to enter with the Iranian Government. But in the middle of 1942 arose a great crisis because of Persian currency laws and the refusal of the Majlis to permit more notes to go into circulation. This brought into sharp relief the power the Majlis had acquired. Ahmad Qavam (Qavamu's-Saltanah) became Prime Minister in August and it was hoped that he would prove co-operative towards the Allies and be strong enough to manage the Majlis. He proved in the end incapable of doing so.

Finally the British had to resort to a military parade in the capital and to delaying the arrival of desperately needed wheat. At the same time they held up the publication of a joint Anglo-American proclamation promising to supply Iran with cereals. This made the political situation in the capital, where people were starving, deteriorate and in December rioting broke out. But the British had to use every means of pressure at their command. They were at the same time gravely concerned over the financial situation and as anxious as anybody else to resist inflationary tendencies. They discussed with the United States Government plans for setting up a Currency Board to regulate Iranian currency and, incidentally, prevent Great Britain from again finding itself in such an embarrassing position in its relations with the Iranian Government.

The Allied war expenditure in Iran amounted to about 400,000,000 rials a month by November 1942. The Iranian note issue had increased from about 1550 million rials in August 1941 to 3 billions in October 1942. Then Allied war needs and the Iranian wheat purchasing programme necessitated an additional issue of some 2 billion rials. Concurrently there had been a rise in price levels, the National Bank's price index having risen from a base of 100 in 1937 to 193 in August 1941 and to 331 by September of the following year; the

cost of living index had gone up from 100 to 418 in the same period. This caused the need for larger note issues and yet also resulted from increased money circulation.

Another factor was the failure of notes to complete the normal cycle and come back to the banks for reissue. This was partly because of lack of confidence in the rial, so that many people used their money for the purchase of land and goods rather than placing it in the bank. It was also partly because of excessive speculation among all classes – another, and interesting, by-product of the 'new freedom', and of times that were dangerous but full of opportunity. Also the numbers of people receiving, perhaps for the first time in their lives, cash wages, for work on roads and on the railways, labour at the ports, employment as drivers, camp servants, and so forth, had increased enormously and among these classes there was some hoarding of notes.

Measures to deal with the currency situation adequately would have included the prohibition of the export of foodstuffs and rigidly controlling, limiting to bare essentials, imports; credit restrictions by banks; taxation of excess profits; food and clothing rationing; laws to control rents, prices and other areas of speculation; anti-hoarding laws; measures to prevent Allied troops and organisations from paying exorbitant prices for purchases made locally – all of them measures which only a strong government with a responsible legislature and reliable police and justiciary could hope to apply effectively. Iran lacked all four.

To meet the Iranian Currency Law's stipulations, the British had originally agreed, in the financial arrangement concluded with Iran in May 1942, that the gold conversion of sterling would be up to 40 per cent in respect of rial transactions. In the winter of 1942 they went so far as to raise this to 60 per cent but still the crisis dragged on. A battalion of British troops stationed at Qum was moved to Tehran to march through the capital, the scene of serious riots. The Shah hesitated over deciding whether or not to urge the Prime Minister to resign. At one point he seems to have thought of forming a military government with himself in the leading position; a suggestion which indicates the way his mind was working already in December 1942. However, at this stage, although they had not always done so, the British Minister apparently asked the Shah to give Qavam his backing and to see that he and others whose houses had been destroyed in the rioting were properly compensated; a quaint demand from a foreign envoy, if it is true that it was made, especially in respect of Ahmad Qavam, one of Iran's wealthiest sons!

Although the currency crisis had been slightly alleviated by a

small concession which Qavam had managed to wring out of the Majlis on 20th October, it was not until 5th January 1943 that the matter was closed, gold cover, as proposed, of Persian sterling and dollar balances being increased from 40 to 60 per cent, while the British made private arrangements with the United States for dollars with which to buy rials. Meanwhile the Persian Government had also agreed to act on the recommendations of an American Food Adviser, which were to include the introduction of food rationing; and of a Transport Control Committee of three, nominated by the Government and the British and United States Ministers.

The Majlis had shown its strength; its refusal to grant the British requests for an increased currency issue had indirectly had the effect of prolonging the agony of the bread shortage; had forced the British into the invidious action of bringing military pressure to bear; had further strained Anglo-Iranian relations; had made the Shah begin to emerge as a positive element on the political scene; and had so shaken British confidence in the Majlis that the idea had been mooted of its forcible dissolution, of a more rigorous form of occupation of the country and of establishing a puppet government. Needless to say, the United States had been strongly averse to the idea of dissolving the Persian Parliament, as it felt that this democratic institution should at all costs be preserved. According to his autobiography, the Shah was shocked when, as he alleges, the British Minister asked him to dissolve Parliament because the Prime Minister could not control it. He says that he 'told the Ambassador[1] that I and my people would alone decide when and if Parliament were to be dissolved, and that we would not be dictated to by outsiders . . .'[2]

Whether such lofty words as these were uttered or not is not in question here; what is significant is that the Majlis could already cause so much trouble and yet achieve so little for the good of the country. It was all very well for the Deputies to pick on rising demands for currency for Allied war needs as the main cause of inflation, when the speculation, exorbitant prices and other factors in the inflationary tendency were also due to their and their friends' flagrant profiteering. British requests for a further note issue made an excellent excuse for discussion of the one cause of inflation which could be used as a screen for others. The darling child of the Constitution was beginning to seem like an *enfant terrible*.

[1] The British and American Ministers were not raised to ambassadorial rank until after the Tehran Conference of the three leaders, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, in 1943.

[2] H.I.M. the Shahanshah of Iran, *Mission for My Country*, London, 1960, p. 76.

Chapter 23

The Mind of the Time

IT WOULD be neither fair nor strictly accurate, however, merely to write off the Iranian National Assembly as the sadly misshapen offspring of the Constitutional Movement, serving only to obstruct development and provide opportunities for corruption. The Majlis was, after all, the symbol of Iran's desire for democracy and independence from foreign interference. As such it was revered by many honest and sensible men, some of whom sat in it. Others, like Taqizadeh and Allah Yar Saleh, represented their country abroad during the war years. The former was Ambassador to Great Britain; the latter, head of the trade delegation in the United States.

Allah Yar Saleh's opinions won respect in Washington. He was in some ways a creature of the Americans, having once been employed in their Tehran Legation. Besides being in the Americans' confidence, Allah Yar Saleh was a man of prudent patriotism and his words were quoted in Washington when he spoke against the dissolution of the Majlis in the grave days of the winter of 1942, when such a step seemed possible. It was he who made one of the last stands on behalf of the Assembly during the period after Musaddiq's fall when, from 1953 to May 1961, the process already alluded to, the gradual running-down of the democratic institution, was taking place. The Shah had the Army to do his bidding by then, also the renewed vigour and confidence of a monarch who had appeared to have lost his throne but who had returned to re-occupy it. His Military Governor in Tehran went to the length of sending troops into the Majlis precincts in 1956 to remove Mr. Allah Yar Saleh, after he had taken sanctuary there in order to remind the ruler and the nation of the Assembly's special claims to respect, and of the danger it was in. His action served to illuminate the danger: it resulted in troops violating the building to take Mr. Allah Yar Saleh out by force.

The Majlis's failure must be fairly assessed. The Allies naturally condemned an institution they saw as an obstacle to Iranian co-operation in the war effort. Naturally, therefore, they tended to emphasise the shelter it afforded to hypocrites who abused the Con-

stitution. The Iranian subject, and for that matter the historian also, cannot, however, be quite so one-sided. The Assembly's weaknesses have to be admitted. At the same time it must also be conceded that to protect Iran's freedom in its own affairs, especially fiscal, and to keep alive the awareness that the war was not a Persian but a European war, while individual Iranians were free to prefer Germans to the English or Russians if they wished to, were quite properly within the Assembly's functions.

Iran was not conquered and did not consider itself a defeated nation; rather, one that had been violated. It did not expect to be dictated to by victors. It believed that when Reza Khan's last Prime Minister, 'Ali Khan Furughi, began his term of office by ordering Persian troops to cease all resistance, Iran had at least won the right to be treated as an equal. Meanwhile the Allies themselves from the beginning spoke of their desire to respect Iran's independence and integrity. They admitted Iran into a treaty of alliance, not one of terms given to a fallen enemy. In criticising the National Assembly it should be borne in mind that between 1941 and 1946 it stood for the rights of a sovereign state.

The extent to which the Majlis as an institution, whatever the conduct of individual members, alone stood for these rights is reflected in its distrust of the Shah and the failure of political parties formed outside it to make any impression on the Assembly.

The Shah had the task of saving the Pahlavi dynasty; although shocked and bruised by what the Allies did, he felt compelled to keep on terms with them, and showed considerable realism in doing so. His role was that of the compromiser who manages to retain what he can of his own and, in this instance, the nation's freedom of action, while going part of the way with alien forces to whom resistance might have meant loss of all. He had seen what happened to his father once communication between him and the British and Russians broke down; he had no desire to suffer the same fate.

The political parties were too easily identifiable with one or another of the Allies or the Axis Powers for a body dedicated to preserving Iran's freedom to want to be committed to any of them. With a sense of what was best for it which, while truly organic, was also partly unconscious, the Majlis rejected any monolithic party structure. It was as if it considered, in its combined wisdom, that at this stage in Iran's history the freedom of the individual deputy could not safely be submitted to a party whip. Deputies were left free to form and break up, with a sometimes bewildering speed, a number of ephemeral 'fractions', as they were called. Foreign powers who sought control of the Majlis through a prominent party were

thwarted. In the end the Majlis resisted the blandishments both of the Tudeh Party and of the British-sponsored National Will Party.

In the next chapter it will be our happy task to show how ultimately the irreconcilable Majlis of Iran defeated a Soviet manoeuvre to gain an oil concession in Northern Persia; a concession so obviously intended as a second string to a movement for domination of the northwest that its political motivation could hardly be doubted. But before the exciting events, and accidents, of 1946 are reviewed, something more must be said about the Majlis as a Parliament operating in relation to a Cabinet of Ministers under a Constitution.

From the start of the period of renewed freedom the thirteenth Majlis made a bid for domination of the government by asserting the right to control the selection of Prime Ministers. Throughout the War, and for some years after, the Majlis was successful in retaining the power to put governments in office and to pull them down. The Shah had not succeeded in gaining that initiative which the Throne had lost on his father's departure. The rise and fall of Ministries were, however, unsatisfactorily rapid. This fact showed the Majlis in a poor light as a body which, although possessing the initiative, lacked a sense of responsibility. From 1941 until 1951 the tragedy of the Iranian political scene, as observed by sympathetic outsiders and by the Shah himself, was the National Assembly's inability to support the Prime Ministers it put in office.

Behind this lie two things: innate suspicion of a man once he gains authority and the failure, on their part, of successive Cabinets to achieve cohesion or to present the ideal of worthiness to govern.

In other words, in Iran two aims are always in conflict. One is the aim to make someone responsible for action, to confer power. The other is to ensure that the man with power should answer to some ideal in the minds of his compatriots; but it is a superhuman ideal and only Prime Ministers no longer in office are suggested as candidates who might have measured up to it! While in office, their fallings-off are alone paramount in the eyes of their critics, and their critics, for the purpose of this argument, are the National Assembly, the Press and the Parties outside the Assembly; and ultimately the whole nation. Out of office, even as are past, defeated and defunct monarchs and dynasties, Prime Ministers are often nostalgically looked back upon as great champions and worthy leaders: leaders, that is to say, such as a nation of perfectionist idealists feels it deserves.

The idealism, however, has its more mundane obverse. This cannot be ignored for it affords part of the explanation of why, so long as he is in office, no Prime Minister has much hope of satisfying his

fellow-countrymen for long. This is only part of the explanation; the suspicion of someone once he has gained power is the other part and must be dealt with shortly. The mundane obverse to the heaven-aspiring perfectionism in the Persian attitude to life lies in the anticipation, and necessity, of those to whom Iranians give power satisfying a disparate collection of group and individual interests. A Prime Minister, in the days when Parliament said who he should be, was chosen when enough interests all happened to coincide in thinking that a certain personality would prove either the most amenable or the least obstructive to their particular ambitions. Of course, once the personality in question received the vote of such an accidental majority as thus came into being, claims were pressed upon him of a variety that made satisfaction of them all out of the question. Unity in his support was soon dissipated into the opposition of those who had not been accommodated and the much more slender backing of those who had.

The innate suspicion of the man in power thus found plenty of ground in which to flourish. With that inextricable combination characteristic of Persia, of the worldly and other-worldly, of the ideal and the base, disappointment because a Prime Minister failed to serve the private interests of a crowd of greedy and ambitious men was reflected in the high-sounding criticism of him as one unworthy of the leadership of the glorious, long-suffering Iranian people. He ran the risk of moral revilement because of his incapacity to meet the immoral demands made on him by a clamorous multitude whose interests could not all be satisfied at once. It goes without saying that at the bottom of all this lay disunity of purpose and complete absence of any civic conception. On the one hand the great nation of Iran deserved only the best; on the other, its individual influential members saw the best only in that leadership which connived at their demands for special privileges, great and small.

A Prime Minister could only be loved for any length of time by those whose 'nephews' his government gave jobs to; whose permits for this and that his government and its agents readily granted, without too much cost in bribes and time; whose acquisition of monopolies his government did not hinder; whose polite indications, that he should make an early call at their houses for harkening to requests and learning what during the day's business he was expected to do, he complied with willingly. (And so the early morning walker in the streets of the better part of Tehran would often see the Premier of the day repairing to a seven-a.m. breakfast at the house of an important businessman.)

Yet the reverse always remained: it could with equal validity be

stated that a Prime Minister might only expect lasting support so long as he gave no sign of gravely impairing Iran's independence; no sign of falling too much under the influence of foreign powers; no sign of curbing too far the freedom of manoeuvre of the various groups and individuals which go to comprise the patchwork of Iranian society – and it is here that obverse and reverse become one; the nature of some conceptions of Iranian patriotism becomes clear; idealism and interest are joined.

In the Constitutional period for far too many patriotism has meant the right of several to batten on the Persian people instead of, as in the days before 1906, only the autocrat being privileged to do so.

This way lies some of the explanation of the enigma of Musaddiq. From 1951 until 1953 that eccentric old man, while he treated the Constitution brusquely enough, also, with a sort of fatalism that seemed as if it might in the end result in nobody enjoying anything at all, made it obvious that for him patriotism was not the right of one group of society to flourish at the expense of others. Faced with the see-saw of the inevitability of a cluster of groups being down while one was up, it might have seemed to him, in the growing clarity of a kind of dementia, that somehow the only way out was to deprive, to destroy all.

This way also will lie part of the explanation with which this introduction to some of the stuff of modern Iranian history must be concluded: the explanation of the enigma of the Shah. From 1961 until the present (1964) that gradually maturing and astute Iranian ruler, while he has likewise had to manipulate and even defy the Constitution (doing, in 1961, what Musaddiq also felt compelled to do, dissolving the Majlis), has, with considerable positivism, tried to redress the balance of the groups at the top by recruiting the power of some fifteen million peasants; an astonishing calling-up of a huge reserve; a display of faith in the nation which, whatever could happen to a monarch in the process, will eventually bring to birth a far more civic, far more real patriotism than has been seen hitherto. For patriotism is based on the will of the people, exercised in the interest of the whole.

Leaving aside for a moment these more general conclusions, let us now turn to the sort of Cabinets those Prime Ministers the Majlis put in power had to command, and their relationships with the Assembly. As has been said, one aspect of government weakness after 1941 lay in Cabinet failure to become a corporate body. The Prime Minister was in effect chairman of a committee that was seldom imbued with a sense of common purpose. Qavam tried to collect a Cabinet that should be and men like Dr. Manuchihr Ighbal and Hasan Arsanjani,

who were with him in this attempt, have never forgotten the exhilaration of it. Generally, however, Cabinets were composed of Ministers whom the Prime Minister had to accept as part of his bargain for power with the Majlis. They were not his men but the creatures of Majlis factions, which it behoved them to serve rather than the Government. They regarded their particular Ministries as their private empire; brooked no interference from the Prime Minister or colleagues; squabbled over budget allocations as if these were distributions of booty.

A strong party system would doubtless have obviated this Cabinet weakness, but the reasons why this did not exist have been mentioned. Cabinets were thus unable to grow out of a majority-holding party and were instead a collection of the appointees of powerful 'fractions' in the Majlis.

The issue, until the final struggle between the Shah and Dr. Musaddiq was resolved in 1953, was complicated to an increasing extent by the Throne's interference. While the Assembly had its reasons for dropping Prime Ministers, the Throne also had its reservations about the strength of the Premier's office and the durability of one man's retention of it. Rivals therefore to the Prime Minister enjoyed the possibility of royal support, often a fugitive and underhand support, expressed in hints, telephoned messages, hastily convened nocturnal audiences and the like, but a support formidable against the government in office and lending itself to all kinds of variations on the theme of intrigue. Qavamu's-Saltanah, always an object of the Throne's suspicion (he was one who had not been broken of two élites of pre-Reza Shah times, the old Qajar aristocracy and also the early Constitutionalist élite) suffered a great deal from this kind of undermining from above; but something went wrong with the Throne's grasp of the techniques of intrigue in its relations with Qavam's cousin, Musaddiq.

The absence of party backing was, therefore, coupled with uncertainty of support from the head of the state: the Prime Minister was in a very weak position. It is surprising that no one ever thought of, or considered themselves wealthy and magnetic enough to achieve, gathering about themselves a band of thugs and strong-arm men powerful enough to keep them in power. Musaddiq solved the problem by utilising the record of years of honest but negative opposition, and finally mobilising national sentiment against the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, first to get into power from a position of strength on a wave of xenophobic emotion; second to try and keep his position by keeping the emotion at boiling point. Inevitably he ended by holding on to a few hairs of the tail of this striped tiger of passion he

had at first been able to ride. But it was his initial assumption of power from a position of such unusual strength that flustered the Throne. He had used the issue of the oil concession to an extent that left the Shah with the appalling choice between acquiescence or abdication; possibly indictment, trial and death. A kite flown by the Court in 1952, when Qavam was Prime Minister again for four days, showed that, although the Majlis and a sufficiency of politicians had been amenable to a change, the temper of the people required continuation of the horrible marriage between the Throne and Musaddiq.

In trying to assess further sources of Cabinet weakness a question which remains is that of Cabinet responsibility to Parliament according to the Constitution. This is important because a collective realisation of responsibility to an institution such as Parliament can force cohesion upon even the most disunited of Cabinets. But this impulsion towards the practice of collective responsibility was also, like party requirements and firm, undeviating confidence from above, absent. It was absent because in fact in the Constitution the question of Cabinet responsibility to Parliament is obscure.

In the Constitutional Law of 30th December 1906, Article 16 states that the Majlis has to 'approve' establishment of Ministries. This relates simply to organisation; the concern is organisational and financial, when a government machinery needs overhauling or creating anew.

Article 27 empowers the House to demand ministerial (not governmental) 'explanation' when violation or negligence in respect of 'the laws' is observed on the part of an individual minister. The following Article seems deliberately to confuse the responsibility issue. It states that if a Minister 'contrary to one of the laws enacted and given the Royal Assent, fraudulently issues written or verbal orders on His Majesty's authority and uses such orders as an excuse for his negligence and lack of attention, he shall, according to the law, be responsible to His Sacred Majesty personally'. Article 29 places responsibility more definitely on the Shah acting on the Majlis's behalf. If a Minister is unable to give a satisfactory account of any matter and it is agreed that he has gone against the law or 'transgressed the limits imposed (upon him)', the Assembly 'shall request His Majesty to dismiss him'. (In this may be seen the tentative groping towards establishment of the grouping: Shah plus Majlis (elective assembly) against élite (coming between Shah and people); cf. the Shah's 1961 approach to the grouping: Shah plus landless peasants against élite-ridden Majlis).

Article 31 implies, not the Ministers' responsibility to the House,

but rather, their separation from it and the absence of the unquestionable assumption that every ministerial act should automatically be explained and discussed in the Assembly. 'The Ministers', it states, 'have the right to attend sessions of the National Consultative Assembly, to occupy places reserved for them, to listen to debates, and, if necessary, after asking permission from the President, to give any explanations that may be necessary for the careful examination of the matters being discussed'.

Under the Supplementary Constitutional Law of 8th October 1907, again the House, according to Article 33, only 'has the right to investigate and examine any affair of state'. But there is the addition of the right to impeach Ministers; but it is a right which will be shown not really to advance the cause of Cabinet responsibility to Parliament.

Other provisions empower the Assembly to discuss and reject proposals put to it by a Minister, but do not forbid a Minister proceeding with rejected proposals. By Article 27 of the Supplementary Law, laws and decrees are said to be carried out by Ministers and State Officials 'in the august name of His Majesty', and this, so long as responsibility to the Majlis is not clear, leaves Ministers the Throne's minions and leaves scope for the type of struggle between Parliament and Throne that began in 1941. Such a provision arises from the strenuous efforts of the framers of the Constitution to ensure adequate definition and, above all, *separation* of powers; the question of responsibility eluded them.

These efforts to separate the legislative, judicial and executive powers (see especially Articles 26 to 28 of the Supplementary Fundamental Law) were aimed at powers being so curbed that in the final outcome nobody could have too much power, and, incidentally, the National Consultative Assembly itself no more control than might be expected of a consultative body. Except in fiscal matters (where in 1906 Persia anticipated England in 1910), it can do no more than discuss matters, raise questions and air views.

Therefore that for a few years it could raise and dismiss Prime Ministers is remarkable; but the Throne was weak and no concept of a strong executive had emerged. Musaddiq tried to meet the menace of the Assembly by obtaining constitutional amendments that gave him complete powers for specified periods – the sort of thing the British Ambassador might have dreamed of in the Currency crisis of 1942 – and in the end he tried to circumvent the Assembly by making members resign their seats; a procedure that the Shah did not discourage, although he never forgave those confused members who took his silence as advice to do Musaddiq's bidding.

Returning to the Constitution's weakness in clarifying responsibilities, it must be remembered that the primary object in 1906 was the dissolution of unaccountable monarchial despotism, and that the panacea for that malaise, autocracy, was thought to be a National Assembly of elected members. The Throne was to be rightly guided by representatives of the people; and was never again to have disposal of the nation's wealth. A Cabinet was scarcely considered at all. The Assembly was to be the Throne's Council and so there was no need for a Cabinet: administration as such was almost ignored by the politicians of the Constitutional Movement.

In succeeding stages, the fact of the existence of Ministers was given more attention. The Supplementary Laws of 1907 include separate clauses to deal with them. Princes, non-Muslims and Muslims not of Iranian origin were declared ineligible for office, for example. And under Article 60, Ministers were actually declared responsible to Parliament, which would seem surely to settle the matter.

But in 1906 and 1907 the mind of the time did not run on either administration of government or its responsibility to the people's elected representatives. It ran, not upon to whom Ministers should bear a collective sense of responsibility for their administrative actions, but upon arranging to keep potentially corrupt ministers in check by ensuring their amenability to the law. Article 60 states that 'when summoned' by Parliament (both the National Assembly and the Senate are intended here), Ministers must 'appear and observe the limits of their responsibility' (individually). Thus at once, by what is both a failing of the litigious Iranian character and of written Constitutions, the terms of the Article vitiate the ministerial responsibility they might at first seem to imply. They limit, by over much definition, the Article's purport, and the fact of a Minister's being 'summoned' to the House conclusively reveals how minds did not conceive that in any event he would be there, in the House, to answer for his every act.

In addition, Article 65 carries fatal definition further and gives the whole show away – if ministerial responsibility to Parliament is the quest. It says the National Consultative Assembly (not, here, both the Assembly and the Senate) 'can call Ministers to account and bring them to trial'. Article 66 states that 'The responsibility of Ministers and the punishments to which they may be liable shall be determined by law'. Admittedly by Article 67 the Assembly and the Senate, severally, may bring about dismissal of a Cabinet or a Minister if parliamentary dissatisfaction is expressed 'by a full majority of votes'. Somebody, perhaps somebody who had crossed

the English Channel, was obviously trying. But the question of responsibility to Parliament had been lifted out of politics into the sphere of the ethics of the behaviour of individual ministers. The concluding Articles of this section put the seal on the process. They described the arrangements for denunciation of a Minister's conduct to the Supreme Court, and the latter's procedure for bringing a Minister to trial.

All a Minister need do, according to the Constitution, was to avoid breaking the laws of the land. The law in Iran is not strong; and, in any event, if a Minister was in power only so long as he helped his friends in Parliament to break the law or get round it, there was little chance of these sombre clauses in the Constitution being invoked against him.

Chapter 24

The Ousting of Russia

THE Majlis's most formidable weapon against Prime Ministers was placed in its hands by Article 7 of the original Fundamental Law, which stated that, 'when a vote is to be taken, the presence of more than half the Deputies present in the capital is necessary and a majority of votes is obtained when more than half the members present in the meeting vote for or against the question'. Article 6 laid down that the Assembly may only be considered convened when two-thirds of the total number of Deputies have reached the capital.

These provisions anticipated elections being spread over a period of several weeks, even months, and the distances Deputies would have to travel, by posting horses or chaise, to reach Tehran from remote cities. Subsequently such provisions remained in the Fundamental Law, giving a Majlis bent on controlling Prime Ministers the means to operate a quorum veto against the Administration in power. What daunted Qavam in his struggles of 1942 over the note issue, and was also in his mind when he said that Dr. Millspaugh would not be so free to act on his own initiative as he had been in 1921, was the realisation of the Assembly's capacity to throw out government measures and encompass the fall of ministries, simply by preventing sufficient Deputies being present to vote on measures put before them. If necessary the absence of Deputies could be ensured by employing the mob. On payment of a few rials per head to a knot of noisy louts, an excited crowd could be gathered in the square outside the Parliament buildings and turn timid Deputies away. Persian dignataries tend to show the utmost poltroonery when faced by a seething crowd; a fact which says much about the state of their consciences, about the gulf between them and the masses, and consequently about the general state of the country. Nothing therefore was easier than frightening away any recalcitrant Deputies who could not otherwise be persuaded to be absent from the Majlis. It is from the years following 1941, when such measures as these terrorist tactics were frequently adopted, that the use of the Tehran mob for political ends can be dated; not from 1906 and the years up to 1911,

for though in the Constitutional Movement 'crowd-scenes' abounded, in those days the dignity and prestige of eminent national and religious leaders was what really counted. Those of the early leaders who survived and saw the terrorist outbreaks of the 1940's and 1950's felt horror and personal guilt because they thought that their Movement was to blame; but they had not been Iran's original terrorists; and they should also perhaps have realised that this was not the end of their Movement. What they witnessed in their old age was the symptom of its continued irresolution.

To return in more detail to the regulations for the election of the First National Assembly laid down in September 1906, it will be recalled that they divided electors into different classes. These classes were six in number and each elector had one vote only and could vote in one class only, although electors need not necessarily elect a Deputy from the class or guild to which they belonged. Persons thus elected then assembled to select from among themselves the member to go to the Assembly, according to the legal quota for each province or district, but this system excluded Tehran, where elections were direct. Four members represented Princes and members of the Qajar House. Four represented the '*ulama*, the leaders, that is, of the religious schools. Ten represented the merchants of the bazaars. Ten represented the landowners and cultivators, while the various trade-guilds were represented by thirty-two members.

Deputies elected under this Electoral Law were to be neither less than thirty years of age nor over seventy, and were to sit for two years. The revised Electoral Law of July 1909 fixed their number at 120 and, in addition to the groups whose representation had already been provided for, established a representative for each of the following tribal groups: Shahsavan (in the northwest), Qashgha'i and Khamsah (in Fars), Turkoman (from the north, centred round the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea), and the Bakhtiari (the Zagros or central region). The Law of 1909 also provided for the Armenians, 'Chaldeans' or Nestorian Christians, Zoroastrians and the Jews to have one representative each. Relatives of the Shah could not be candidates.

A law of November 1911 fixed the number of Deputies at 136, elected from eighty-two electoral districts. By this law the property qualification for electors was abolished,[1] but residence qualifications were emphasised and henceforth elections were to be direct. By a further revision in October 1934, tribal representation and tribal constituencies were abolished. In 1957 Article 4 of the Constitution was amended to extend the legislative term of the Majlis from two

[1] See p. 127.

years to four. Indeed, in this year, as a result of a joint meeting of the Assembly and the Senate on May 8th 1957 to effect certain constitutional changes, Article 7 regarding the vexed question of the quorum for debates and voting was also modified. In 1963 further amendments made possible the candidature of women and six women were sitting in the Majlis and two in the Senate by January 1964. This followed arrangements whereby women had been given a token vote in revised procedures for electing municipal councils; portents of total female enfranchisement in the near future.

Besides the use of the 'quorum veto' made during the war years against Prime Ministers, another factor in those days was, of course, the occupation of most of the country by foreign powers. Between 1941 and 1946 the selection of Prime Ministers to no slight degree reflected the attitudes adopted by influential members of the community towards the Allies, either combined or separately as Russians, English, and, later, Americans. Interwoven in the study of attitudes and likely postures were the Allies' diplomatic representatives' own opinions about a candidate's suitability for the highest office. He could either be considered directly useful because he was amenable to British, Russian or American pressure; or his recommendation could rest on his capacity to silence opposition and keep the Soviets in a state of reasonable acquiescence—considerations of importance to the British. It may be suspected that in 1942 Ahmad Qavam appeared, certainly to the British, somewhat in this guise, while he was careful to cultivate the American love of being liked.

By 1942 it was already clear that the only political party potentially formidable was the pro-communist Tudeh. The Marxist-influenced intellectuals' political activity was resumed with a demonstration on 3rd February at the grave of Dr. Arani, their former leader, who had died in prison. Released from prison under the 1941 amnesty, the intellectual liberals were now free to act. At first they do not appear to have intended being branded as extremists. On the contrary they showed the desire to maintain an air of respectability; a distinctly 'bourgeois' air. Certainly most of these Berlin- or Brussels-trained doctors, dentists and engineers, these writers and cultured, modernist aspirants for 'progress', the raising of standards and eradication of corruption, were themselves distinctly burgher in origin.

As if to make their desire to placate people of high social status and conservative outlook even clearer, Sulaiman Muhsin Iskandari, a Qajar prince whom we have met before in the Socialist camp,[1] was made the new party's leader. He would be able to afford the new party access to members of the old, pre-1921 élite, to which by

[1] See p. 164, where he is referred to as a 'garrulous prince'.

birth he belonged. In fact, what superficially might appear to have been courting conservative elements was symptomatic of a more astute attempted alignment of forces: a return to the patterns of influence that had existed until Reza Shah broke them down by his own supremacy.

As has already been suggested, in a sense the Tudeh emerged in 1942 as the heir of the old secular modernist wing of the Constitutional Movement, the Democrats. The degree to which the Tudeh marked the re-emergence of this earlier political force roughly corresponded to the proportion of its leadership that possessed a German background. This proportion was high; the Russian-indoctrinated members were a different proposition and in the minority. Thus it is possible to discern in the Tudeh Party's nucleus vestiges of the attitudes and aims of the men who trekked away to Kirmanshah in 1915 to join German and Turkish military units; and, more particularly, to discern the programmes and aspirations of the Persian intellectual coterie shut up in Berlin between 1914 and 1918 and which stayed on there in the nineteen-twenties. Here lies a great deal of the appeal the Tudeh Party was able initially to make capital out of; it was an appeal to intellectual liberals generally, regardless of individual feelings about Marxism and the Soviet system of government.

On another plane, apart from liberal sentiment in favour of radical social change – the desire to achieve national dignity and wholesomeness – lay the appeal of a party that could be expected to please the Northern Neighbour. Reference has been made to Mushiru'd-Daulah's wish to be on good terms with the new Bolshevik state in 1920, when he laid the foundations of the 1921 Irano-Russian Treaty. It was noted that this could be related to Mushiru'd-Daulah's position as a landlord in the Northern Provinces. It has been observed that the economic link between North Iran and the U.S.S.R. cuts across political sympathies. This must be borne in mind in connection with Qavamu's-Saltanah's capacity to come to terms with the Tudeh Party in 1942; while for a time in 1946 he was suspected of being its dupe. Qavam's great wealth was based almost entirely on estates in Gilan. The shrewd Persian aristocrat, with his vast interests in paddy fields and tea plantations on the doorstep of the U.S.S.R., was fully aware of the importance for Iran of temporizing with Russia.

In 1942 Qavam was quite a Russian favourite. He spoke Russian, although in the desperate crisis of 1946 he was always careful to negotiate through interpreters; and he had received part of his education in Tsarist Russia. The Tudeh thought him better than

men like 'Ali Dashti, one of those who was stigmatised as a courtier or as subservient to the British. The Majlis, on the other hand, never trusted Qavam and neither, for different reasons, does the Shah seem to have done so.

Typical of a Persian statesman of Qavam's experience and perspicacity and, more especially, of one who risked being tarred with the Russian brush (and who had to avoid the British alternative), Qavam turned eagerly to America. He sought the third force; the way out of the Persian impasse between the Bear and the Lion. But when it came to the crisis, Uncle Sam was a somewhat blurred and hesitant figure. Qavam, one of the most remarkable men in the history of modern nations, had to play it alone, often off the cuff – his principal advantage, manipulation of time.

One is reminded of the emphasis F. W. Kaye, the nineteenth century historian of the British in India and of the first Afghan War, places on the element of chance in Oriental affairs. He refers frequently to what he calls 'the Chapter of Accidents'. It is impossible as yet to distinguish clearly when, during his retrieval from Russia of the rich province of Azerbaijan, Qavam was playing off the cuff, and when he was acting according to a premeditated plan. The impression remains that much could be headed 'the Chapter of Accidents'. It was the day for an experienced gambler; and indeed most Persian aristocrats are gamblers. Their poker games sometimes last for days on end. Before Muhammad Reza Shah's recent land reforms, villages were often the stakes. When a man could think of no more villages to play for, or perhaps had none left, he might throw down the keys of his Chevrolet or Buick.

From what we know of the dignity and character of Ahmad Qavam, it is unlikely that he was subject to the gambling fever to this extent. But he belonged to a tradition which included the most desperate as well as most adroit play, and from his very childhood he had been in the forefront of political affairs. Besides heavy stakes on the green baize, his tradition included many years of the biggest game of all, the game for Iran's preservation. He was, moreover, a beautifully educated man. His Persian calligraphy was celebrated. In the early days of the Constitutional Movement, when he was only a youth, he had been commissioned to pen the Movement's manifestoes; the young nobleman of princely connections was also one of the liberals. It would be wrong to apply the terms of a Western class structure and industrial society to the Iranian scene, and there was nothing impossible or unusual in aristocrats writing out revolutionary manifestoes; there has always been great class mobility in Iran, coupled over many centuries with sudden and

startling political changes. In addition, the love of letters, social adeptness, charming manners, good looks, witty repartee, have always been passports into all circles. Qavam, a handsome, gifted young man, capable of turning a pretty lyric, making graceful variations on the monorhymes and old images of a great literary canon, was naturally attracted by men whose origins were of far less importance than their talents and ideals, and who were in their turn attracted by him. The cultured Iranian of his tradition, of old Persia, enjoyed the complete freedom of social intercourse conferred in a poetry-loving society on all who share the love of verse. Iran's used to be a society in which practically everyone, even illiterates, could recite poetry from memory and adorn conversation with apposite quotations.

Among the tents put up in gardens during the hot weather, men of all classes sat and exchanged anecdotes and poems to the chink of tea-glasses and often to the wassail of the wine-bowl or shallow watch-glass-shaped cup of fiery spirits. Their common bond was the beautiful Persian language and its exquisite poetry. Their right to be admitted into society lay in their adaptability and charm. While Iranians are not given to sentiment, men like Qavam would stake everything to preserve the freedom of Iranians to be Iranian; to enjoy the leisure of a day spent in a garden; the thrill of the lute-like melody of the *citar* or the staccato dulcimer-like notes of the many-stringed *santur*. Hafiz is a supra-national poet, yet only a Persian could have made heaven and earth meet in his poems as he does. It means a great deal to be of the same race and tongue as he.

According to the Anglo-Soviet-Persian Treaty of 1942, the Allied occupying forces were to be out of Iran within six months after the end of hostilities. Molotov evaded a British and United States proposal at Yalta in February 1945, to advance the date as a gesture of goodwill. At Potsdam in July and August of the same year, however, it was agreed to evacuate Tehran, which was done by early September. Nevertheless, numerous Russian troops were said to have stayed in the capital in civilian clothes; though this may have been simply a Russian-inspired rumour to scare people.

During the Occupation the Russians had almost nullified Iranian government authority in the northwestern provinces. This could, in the light of subsequent events, be regarded as part of the preparation for any eventuality, aimed at retention of a dominant position in Azerbaijan and Gilan. It could also be regarded as merely a ruthless way of assuring efficient control of the northern end of the supply route. But two birds could be killed with one stone and the propaganda accompaniment, the encouragement of separatist movements

and lukewarmness in dealing with the Kurdish revolt, commented on by the Americans in 1941 and 1942, indicate that secession and retention of the northwestern areas was among Russian post-war plans for Iran from an early date.

Meanwhile in the capital they had gained control of a number of newspapers and from 1945 to 1946 they mounted an all-out bid to captivate the hearts, if not the minds, of the intellectuals. A First Congress of the Iranian Writers was held with great éclat in the grounds of the Russian Embassy. Qavam was then Prime Minister again and delivered an inaugural address. Eminent and elderly men of letters spoke, so did eminent and young ones, on various aspects of Persian literature, with the accent on the modern period. The published proceedings comprise a valuable compilation of Persian writers' views on recent literary developments. Of these there had been many and the Congress provided the first major stocktaking and critical appreciation of them. It also formed a stage on which to display Russo-Persian friendliness.

Western anxiety over this would have been needlessly exaggerated if it had been believed that men like H. E. Dr. Khanlari, H. E. Mirza 'Ali Askar Hekmat or Qavam himself were completely captivated by the Russians, however much the ripples of hand-clapping and gusts of friendly laughter and chatter may have reverberated under the great plane trees of the Russian Embassy's compound. The papers read by Iranians at the Congress are conspicuously free of pro-communist propaganda. The Persian contingent may have included eager young men, young men of talent, too, who were card-holding members of the Party; but by and large it was a collection of liberals, such as would have been welcomed in many a perfectly respectable drawing-room in Victorian London. Unfortunately, however, England in 1946 was less interested in Kossuths, Mazzinis and Garibaldis than it had been a century before.

Perhaps it was because the British did not see Iranian patriotism or patriots in quite the same light as it had been fashionable to see those of countries like Italy and Hungary in 1848. There was a tendency to consider Iran too inferior for any of her aspirants for liberty and national regeneration to be equated with well-known nineteenth century European models. In 1945 there was no longer a Professor E. G. Browne in England to organise gatherings in London in which Persians were spoken of as a noble people to whom all men of taste owed something. The English experts in 1945 doubtless liked Iran, with its clear air, scope for field sports, adventurous journeys and exhilarating living. They no doubt liked Iranians, or some of them. One or two, in a reserved, inarticulate way,

probably found in Iran a zest and joy they could find nowhere else, least of all in their own country. To this enjoyment Iranian companions contributed a great deal, as did the mountain air and high, wild valleys; the beautiful Safavid architecture of Isfahan, the still pools in a garden at Shiraz and so on. But the Iranians were 'they' and 'them'; and 'they' did not gain the confidence of the British.

The British in fact, in 1946, knew enough to know that broadly speaking the regard paid by many Iranians to Soviet ideals was only lip-service. It was perhaps on this account that, in spite of the very considerable British oil interest, the English authorities appeared to treat the signs of increasing Soviet influence rather casually. George Lenczowski, a Polish diplomat during the war in Tehran who has since become an American citizen, in his book, *Russia and the West in Iran*,[1] one of the most authoritative works on modern Persian politics, speaks with dismay of how the British let the Russians conduct propaganda in Tehran and provincial cities; they even went to the extent of lending their Soviet colleagues part of a British propaganda display window in Tehran. Perhaps the British were already beginning to feel that, with India probably not much longer in the fold, they could begin tailing off their involvement with Iran.

By 1945 the Russians had seemed already to be having their own way; among other things, they could work censorship in their favour. While censorship provisions under the 1942 Tripartite Treaty were applied to international agencies that were independent of government, such as Reuters, Tass, a government department, was exempted. A major portion of news about conditions in Iran therefore emanated from this Russian source.

This plain sailing for Russia was little marred by a Great Britain exhausted and faced by many problems more pressing than Persia, while the United States Government, though worried about trends in Iran, was subjected to divided counsels about how far to commit itself in external matters and lacked a clear-cut policy and mature tradition in the field of foreign affairs.

After the armistice with Japan, the date for the departure of British and Russian forces became 2nd March 1946. The Americans had a different programme for withdrawal. Molotov was again evasive when Mr. Bevin addressed him on the matter in writing in September 1945 at the meeting of Foreign Ministers in London. In the meantime, from the beginning of 1945, Tudeh Party newspapers

[1] George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran 1918–48*, Ithaca, N.Y., 1949 and subsequent editions.

had started working a propaganda vein provided for them by the section of the Constitution relating to the setting up of Provincial Councils.

This section had never been acted upon but its embodiment in the Constitution may be taken to represent one of the poles of Persian political thinking on how best Iran should be administered. There are those – Sayyid Ziau'd-Din Tabatabai is one – who believe in the necessity for a greater measure of provincial autonomy. The opposite view tends towards greater centralisation. For obvious reasons this was Reza Shah's policy and under him most of the provincial officials were appointed from Tehran. The centralisation school has in the post-war period also received impetus from the events we are about to describe, but today there is a slight break and, in his utterances in the autumn of 1961, the Shah adumbrated a greater measure of provincial and municipal independence than had formerly been the rule. By 1955 centralisation had reached a stage when practically all imports could be cleared only in the Tehran Customs; when a journey to the capital was necessary to get almost anything whatever dealt with by the administration.

In 1945 references to dormant provisions in the Constitution for a degree of provincial autonomy were made on behalf of one province only, Azerbaijan. It was stated that although Azerbaijan had succeeded in returning Tudeh members to the Majlis in 1943, nevertheless this dynamically progressive and rich province had discovered that it could not out-vote the 'reactionary' majority and so had set its heart on having its own Assembly.

This was all part of an old story, albeit in 1945 being told in a contemporary and distinctly Soviet-inspired idiom, for from the earliest days of the Majlis it had been the Tabriz deputies who were most solicitous for the liberties of the Constitution and their Azerbaijani constituents who were the most vigilant against submission to tyranny.

Therefore the beginnings of the Azerbaijan separatist movement of 1945–6 contained an insidious mixture of older themes which made it come as less of a shock. It was a superb example of how already long-established emotions and belief can be used to promote discord. Azerbaijan was a first experiment in Soviet satellite tactics.

By August 1945 a rumoured 'Azerbaijan Committee for National Liberation' came out into the open as the Democratic Party, to which the local Tudeh was quickly affiliated. The Tudeh Party was not so prominent as might be expected and seems to have been distrusted in the higher ranks of Stalinist theoreticians and plotters, possibly because it was too bourgeois. The Azerbaijan movement

was principally in the hands of Russian-trained men; not of Persian emigrés returned from pre-Nazi Germany.

Azerbaijan is very fertile and therefore vital to Iran. It is also Iran's window on to the West and therefore an important reservoir of brains and modern efficiency, both of which its denizens show in a high degree. Nevertheless it had much to complain of and was one of the provinces that had suffered most under Reza Shah. He hated the southern provinces of Fars, Kirman and Khuzistan because in his mind they were associated with the British. He also, it is alleged, looked with disfavour on Azerbaijan; perhaps this was because his Qajar predecessors had normally ruled there as Crown Prince; or because he associated it with the Russian dominance of 1909 to 1918. In his Cossack days he had fought there against the Bolsheviks and known defeat and a vile retreat through bitingly cold, snow-covered passes in its mountains. He would also not have forgotten the fractious Kurds in Azerbaijan and their leader, Semitgou, whom he had had to contend with in his own struggle for power.

Apart from this sense of injustice at the hands of the central government, linguistic and even racial differences could be used to fan the flame of secession. The local dialect of Turkish, Azari, was forbidden by the central government as an official language, yet most people spoke it in their daily intercourse. As, however, Persian was always unquestionably used for written communications, use of the linguistic situation as an excuse for separation was somewhat artificial. Similarly with race: Iranians are generally mixed and while there are many Turks in Azerbaijan, there are many elsewhere too, in the city and region of Qazvin, which borders on Azerbaijan, and in Tehran, for example.

Turkishness was not, however, played on to any extent in the propaganda for a separate Azerbaijan. The Soviet Government would have no desire to raise the bogey of Turkish racial feeling, Pan-Turanism not being welcome to the power ruling large areas of Central Asia. Also, whatever else they may have wanted, and however much opposed to the Tehran Government they may have been, the Azerbaijani insurgents would not desire to use slogans that might link them politically with Turkey. They and their Russian friends thought in terms of the juncture of Iranian and Soviet Azerbaijan on a north-south axis, not in terms of a link with Turkey in the west.

The 'Democrat' leaders made use of supporters from Soviet Transcaucasia which, as reported in *The Times* on 26th January 1946, could easily be infiltrated into the 'heterogeneous population' of Azerbaijan, as they had been from the same Caucasian region

during the Constitutional Movement in the first decade of the century. Yet there was no need to emphasise the heterogeneity of Azerbaijani population. The fact was that there were strong affinities between people in northwest Iran and their confrères beyond, the Armenian element on both sides of the Irano-Soviet Azerbaijan frontier not excluded.

Ja'far Pishevari had been Commissar of Internal Affairs in the short-lived Bolshevik republic of Gilan in 1920–21. He later became a Comintern agent. Claiming to be running away from a Soviet purge, in 1936 he returned to Iran but was at once imprisoned. Released in the 1941 amnesty, he began publishing a Tudeh Party newspaper called *Azhir*. He had been returned for Tabriz with a substantial majority in the Majlis elections of 1943 but the Majlis rejected his credentials. In 1945 he was the leader of the Azerbaijan movement which, on 16th and 17th November, seized the Government Offices in Tabriz and the railhead a hundred miles to the southeast, at Miyaneh, cutting off communications with Tehran. The insurgents received arms which the Russians had taken from the Persian Army in 1941. On 17th November the Central Government notified the Soviet Embassy of its intention to send a military force into the Soviet Zone to quell the rebellion, but the Russians prevented the force proceeding further than Qazvin. Their published explanation of this was that the movement in Tabriz was 'spontaneous and popular', and, they added, not engineered with Russian connivance.

The United States was in a slightly embarrassing position for the following reasons. (1) It had recently sanctioned the reappointment, for a further two years, of U.S. officers, under Colonel Schwarzkopf, a highly efficient man, to act as advisers to the Persian gendarmerie and police departments. This did not go unnoticed in Republican Congressional circles where it was asked how America would like to see Russian officers in similar positions in Mexico. But this apart, (2) American officials had been anxious throughout the war years to consolidate the U.S. position in Iran: over-emphatic protests to Russia might have resulted in attention being drawn to the presence of Americans in Persia and, consequently, in damaging recriminations. (3) Apart from the desire not to push things to the point when everybody had to show their hand, President Roosevelt's successor was no doubt averse to risking an early demise of the 'beautiful friendship' subsisting among the Big Three. He had every right to be: there were many issues to be settled between the great wartime partners, far too important to be sacrificed for the sake of Iran. (4) There were circles and organs in the United States expressing

ympathy for the Tudeh 'intellectuals', 'share-cropping' Iranian peasants and even the Azerbaijanis specifically.

The United States Government, therefore, confined itself in its protest of 24th November to expressing the supposition that the Russian officers who had barred the passage of an Iranian military force to Tabriz had acted without proper instructions, and to suggesting that all Allied forces be withdrawn from Iran by 1st January 1946. Russia was also reminded of the Three Powers' Declaration on Iranian independence, signed at Tehran in 1943.

The British also protested, but left 2nd March as the date by which Allied forces should be withdrawn. The British in their turn were also embarrassed, notably by Russian references to the situation in Palestine, Egypt and Indonesia.

Husain 'Ala, the Iranian Ambassador in Washington, had helped to precipitate protests from the Western Allies by his quick representations to the United States Government. The Soviets replied that the date of withdrawal need not be revised and that the Persians had been told that introduction by them of further forces into Azerbaijan would only lead to increased disorders which would compel the U.S.S.R. to increase its own forces there on the pretext of 'protecting' the existing Soviet garrison, estimated at over 30,000 men.

Russia also told the Persians that the Soviet sympathised with Azerbaijani demands for autonomy. The Persian Government convened a Council of State, which included five former Prime Ministers, to advise on the situation. Provincial governors were ordered to arrange for the election of Provincial Councils; Councils which, according to *The Times* correspondent, had in the past often been urged by the British.

There was no room for apathy in Tehran: the Russians had other irons in the fire besides the Azerbaijani Democrat insurrection and their part in a Kurdish uprising was at first very pronounced.

The Kurds near the shores of Lake Reza'iyeh (formerly Lake Urumiah), centred on the little town of Mahabad, had been courted by the Soviet Consulate at Reza'iyeh since 1944. A Soviet-Kurdish Cultural Relations Society was founded at Mahabad. In September 1945, under its auspices a smiling and dignified band of Mahabad Kurdish notables was flown for an indoctrination session at Baku. Young men followed, to be taught trades and skills or admitted to Soviet Universities. Kurdish rebels against the Iraq Government, which with Iran and Turkey shares the Kurdish problem, escaped from Iraq in October and were welcomed at Mahabad. They were of the Barzani tribe and led by Mulla Mustafa, of whom the world

has again heard since 1958. They had British arms seized from units of the Iraq army, and Soviet officers placed them under the orders of Qazi Muhammad, the respectable old man of Mahabad who found himself the head of a small Kurdish separatist movement. The 'Kurdish People's Republic' was proclaimed on 15th December 1945, and covered an area of some fifty miles round Mahabad.

This meant that the whole of Azerbaijan, with the possibility of Kurdish areas further south down Iran's western frontier also becoming infected, was alienated from the Central Government and subjected to Soviet direction, to whatever degree the Soviet Government might consider desirable. A threat was posed to Iraq because, with the corridor to the south in Russian control, a Soviet move through Azerbaijan to Northern Iraq would be easy. If the Kurds of Mahabad could spread their movement to embrace Kirmanshah, supposing them always docile to the Russians, Soviet influence might at a future time be pushed through a link of two puppets, Azerbaijani and Kurdish, directly to the region of the Rivers Tigris, Karkheh and Karun and so, right to the shores of the Persian Gulf.

But these visions of a Soviet-dominated Western Iran, if they were entertained at all, doubtless only formed part of a very wide dream of Russian strategy. For the moment, in the post-war phase of negotiations in Europe, it may be assumed that, though also a minor experiment in satellitism, Russian activities in Azerbaijan in 1945 and 1946 were primarily little more than a rather macabre demonstration, designed to divert the West's attention from Eastern Europe.

When the Moscow Conference began in December 1945, Stalin used the Persian issue for his preliminary sparring with Mr. Byrnes. Mr. Bevin proposed a joint team of investigators, but Mr. Molotov kept the matter in play until the evening of Christmas Day. On 26th December, however, the diversion was suddenly called off: Mr. Molotov 'now said that the Persian question was not properly on their agenda and could not be considered'.[1]

The Iranians, during Ibrahim Hakimi's premiership, rejected Mr. Bevin's reiterated proposal for an Anglo-Soviet-American team of investigators and advisers on the establishment of Provincial Councils into which the Azerbaijan 'Government' could be assimilated. It was a clever idea for breaking the deadlock, but final rejection of it by the Persians on 10th January 1946 was greeted in Tehran with

[1] George Kirk, *Survey of International Affairs: The Middle East 1945–50*, Oxford 1954, p. 63.

joy because the Iranians had thought it an insulting proposal which bordered on the trivial; they were faced with the loss of a province and regarded the time for teams of investigators as having passed.

The Azerbaijanis' first proclamation had, however, shown the way to the possibility of complete secession being avoided by consolidating Provincial Councils all over the country. The Azerbaijanis had declared that their 'National Government' recognised the Persian Central Government and would in certain spheres carry out its instructions, provided they were not contrary to the will of the Parliament of Azerbaijan; Azerbaijan was not willing again completely to be subservient to the Tehran Majlis.

Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes did not encourage the Iranian Ambassador in London, Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh, to bring the matter before the first session of the United Nations General Assembly, but on 19th January he did so nevertheless, provoking Soviet attacks on the presence of British troops in Greece and observations on the presence of British forces in Indonesia. After urging that the Azerbaijan question was a matter for direct discussion between Russia and Iran, and after Taqizadeh had again raised the matter in the Security Council on 28th January, Mr. Vyshinsky in the end reluctantly agreed that the Council might demand a further report : Iran had at least succeeded in getting its plea on to the Agenda of the Security Council and in keeping it there.

In Tehran the last months of 1945 saw various accommodatory moves, typically in the Persian tradition of trying to placate an enemy or make him think that there are no real grounds for hostility and that his position is granted. Thus a pro-British Minister was removed; another left the Cabinet because of his association with the anti-Tudeh National Will Party of Sayyid Ziau'd-Din Tabataba'i, considered too pro-British. How far, however, these manoeuvres were aimed, not so much at keeping the U.S.S.R. happy as at keeping Mr. Hakimi in the Prime Minister's chair, can only be surmised, on the grounds that there was at the time scarcely any communication between Hakimi and the Soviets, whose Ambassador had been withdrawn; and that in Iran, in the middle of a great national crisis, moves which might be made because of the crisis, might equally well merely be motivated by some purely personal or local consideration. It is, for reasons that do not always seem immediately obvious, apparently very sweet to be Prime Minister.

In spite of the boost obtained from his rejection of Mr. Bevin's proposal for the advisory inspectorate, the aged Hakimi was unable to last beyond 20th January 1946. By a margin of only one vote, the Majlis elected Ahmad Qavam Prime Minister six days later. So

far as the crisis was concerned, Qavam had the advantage of having strengthened his relationship with the Tudeh since his term as Premier in 1942–43. He had assisted in the Tudeh election successes of 1943. He declared himself free of bias against any foreign nation – the oft-repeated tenet of an old Iranian statesman – but concerned only to serve Iran. Stalin replied with friendly signs to his first message and Qavam made haste to dismiss a, according to the Tudeh, pro-British and 'Fascist' Chief of the Army Staff, General 'Arfa. Two days after this, on 18th February, Qavam was whisked off in a special Soviet plane to Moscow. The fanfare trumpeting his departure in the Persian left-wing Press was a medley of violent anti-British propaganda, in which the British were charged with arming the tribes of Southern Iran (which would have had its historical logic after the Russian-sponsored Kurdish affair at Mahabad in the northwest), the Ambassador was attacked, and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company accused of mistreating its workers.

March, the critical month, came and the last six hundred British troops were withdrawn, the last Americans having left by 1st January. The Russians deigned to evacuate the northeast but told Qavam they would keep troops in the northwest of Iran until the situation there was clarified. The United States protested and American observers saw Soviet tanks twenty-five miles to the west of Tehran. On 21st March, the Persian New Year's Day, an armed coup (with Soviet support) by the Tudeh was expected in the capital; the Americans now acted more positively than before and raised the hue and cry about Soviet forces still being located in the vicinity of Tehran. It is unlikely, however, that the U.S.S.R. intended much more than to create panic. The British also sought an explanation for the violation of the 1942 Tripartite Treaty's ruling on withdrawal of forces, but they treated the matter more mildly than did the Americans.

March was to be a busy month for Qavam. Back in Tehran from Moscow on the 10th, he reported failure but hope that when the new Russian Ambassador, Sadchikov, arrived, negotiations could begin afresh, consideration being given to the Soviet desire to exploit oil in the north of Iran. By 21st March Sayyid Ziau'd-Din Tabataba'i was taken into custody, a sign that Qavam was increasing his flirtation with the Tudeh Party and anxious not to be regarded as a pro-British reactionary. In the meantime, on 18th March, Husain 'Ala, Persia's delegate at the United Nations, had once more, to Russia's intense annoyance, brought the Persian question to the notice of the Security Council. This played into Qavam's hands because he could, while reproachfully warning Mr. 'Ala in America

to cease action that might exacerbate the situation, nonetheless take advantage of Russia's chagrin at being exposed to the world as an aggressor. On 24th March the Soviet Ambassador informed Qavam that complete withdrawal of Russian troops would begin that day. He also handed him a memoranda on an Irano-Russian oil enterprise and another on a form of autonomy for Azerbaijan.

Russia's embarrassment at inclusion of Iran's complaint on the Security Council's agenda continued, Gromyko eventually walking out in anger, leaving the Council unanimously to agree to a report being required on 3rd April by both parties to the dispute. Qavam could publicly say 'tish, tish' over these Security Council scenes and Mr. 'Ala's persistence; privately he could assess the wear they were beginning to occasion Soviet nerves. Perhaps, as was at times his wont, he giggled quietly to himself. Anyway he repulsed a Soviet hint that 'Ala be moved: he simply confirmed him as Persia's delegate in the Security Council. Moreover, he bided his time over agreeing to Soviet proposals in connection with the withdrawal of their troops. He objected to a phrase, that the withdrawal would be completed within a specified period if 'no unforeseen circumstances should occur', and left things in the air, confining himself to verbal comments concentrated particularly on this phrase. He was not playing for time : he had won it. He was just being cool and tantalising, keeping the other man in suspense. He thus left scope for the question still to go on in the Security Council, now to seek yet a further exposure of the situation, on 6th May.

The Security Council provided Qavam with one good card but his best ace was going to be the Soviet request to exploit oil. On 5th April the Persians approved an agreement for Russian troop withdrawals with the U.S.S.R. on condition that Persian Azerbaijan should be empty of Russian troops within six weeks from 24th March. The agreement also provided for a combined oil venture to last fifty years and to be submitted to the Persian Parliament within seven months from 24th March. Azerbaijan was to be recognised as an internal Iranian problem, the Iranian Government promising to deal generously with the insurgents there.

By getting a period as long as seven months set for submission of the oil matter to the Majlis, Qavam ensured that it would go before a new Majlis, as the time of the existing one was running out. A law had been passed forbidding elections while foreign troops remained in the country, but there was of course no legal way of granting an oil concession other than with Majlis approval. Also, with consummate skill, Qavam had made the holding of elections dependent upon a satisfactory end to Government negotiations with the Azerbaijan

'Government'. This meant that, conclusion of an oil agreement their principal aim, the Soviet Government was forced to concede the necessity of a rapid accommodation between Tehran and Tabriz; Soviet support of the Tabriz Democrat Party instantly cooled. With Qavam assuring the Russians that he could pack the new Majlis with Tudeh elements sympathetic to their oil proposals, the utmost expedition in the withdrawal of the last Russian troops was also guaranteed, in order to hasten the elections of that supposedly amenable Assembly. As Qavam himself was to retain the portfolio of the Ministry of the Interior and so be the Minister responsible for arranging the forthcoming elections, his blandishments on this score were the more readily credible to the Soviet negotiators. Thus he achieved the evacuation of Azerbaijan by Russian troops and was left with a period of seven months in which to shape whatever kind of Majlis would, in the fullness of time, appear to him most suitable to his purposes.

Negotiations with the Azerbaijani leaders began and failed over the Democrats' demand that they, not the Central Government, should appoint the Governor-General of Azerbaijan and should be free to distribute state land among the peasants. There was also argument over the proportion of revenue to be paid to the Central Government by the Province and the insurgents declared 'war' against the Government. This could have been a nuisance to Qavam, his head filled with memories of his own and his father's and brother's years as tax officials in Azerbaijan, and, more important, of Russian occupations of Tabriz on the pretext of putting down disorders. Both types of recollection are mentioned because, as both are germane, there is also room to suppose that Qavam knew whom to approach in Tabriz to prevent the situation getting out of hand: he must have had both contacts there and considerable local knowledge of the province. But there was also the Soviet need to see agreement brought about quickly so that elections could begin. By the end of May, the Tabrizi leaders were sounding much more conciliatory and on 11th June the redoubtable Muzaffar Firuz was received with honour by them as leader of a Central Government mission.

Above all Qavam had to prevent his plans being ruined by a Russian re-entrance to quell 'disorders' or because the Iranian Government was not carrying out its promise of successfully and benevolently negotiating with the Tabrizis. Also, to lull Soviet suspicions, to prevent them too soon perceiving that they were in fact the victims of one of the biggest pieces of double-dealing in Persian history, Qavam had to dress the Iranian window with Tudeh

colours, as an augury of the type of Majlis that he had promised the Russians would ratify their oil proposals.

Friendship between Iran and Soviet Russia was assiduously cultivated; the Congress of Writers we have mentioned was only part of the Irano-Russian junketing and back-slapping that now became the order of the day. The Tudeh were free as never before to act and by 16 July 1946 their operations of several years in the southern oil-fields culminated in a serious strike among the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's Persian labour force. Eventually the Government stepped in, Muzaffar Firuz again acting as a mediator. But Qavam had to be careful; he did not risk intervention in the Oil Company strike until the seriousness of the situation compelled him to it, and afterwards he allowed the Governor of Abadan to be court-martialled for steps he had taken, on behalf of the Government, to suppress disturbances.

In fact Qavam seemed to be falling over backwards to give the Tudeh Party a free rein. To foreign observers from the West he began to appear a terribly dangerous man. Although throughout this time, according to one observer, the Shah seemed to be of scarcely any significance at all, as his autobiography shows he too was extremely perturbed by Qavam's ostensible truckling to the Tudeh. Qavam was playing it alone; he could take scarcely anyone into his confidence, and he had to disregard the figure that he seemed to many to be cutting of a traitor prepared to let the country become communist.

In August 1946 he took three well-known Tudeh men into a new Cabinet he formed; with the apparently pro-Tudeh Muzaffar Firuz as his Vice-Premier, he could be said to have included four Tudeh sympathisers in office. It became fashionable to join the Tudeh Party, especially among the young and the intellectuals, and to support trades unions, though this new fashion only prevailed among those to whom trades unions meant something; and older men, even when intellectuals, made fewer recruits for the Party than the young and headstrong. Expressing interest in the Party's aims and hopes over a glass of tea was the limit of many older men's active sympathy.

The British complained that security in the oil-fields remained unsatisfactory. The growth of trades unionism in cities continued. Rather belatedly, the Tudeh began to seek support among those portionless, toiling rural masses, to the alleviation of whose plight this very urban political party had declared itself dedicated from the start. It had, however, hitherto established very little contact with the great peasant majority of the population, in their far-flung

villages, often with barely a track leading to them. The peasants of some areas were aroused and some cases of looting, arson and withholding the landlord's share occurred. But nothing serious enough seems to have been happening in August to justify British apprehensions leading to the dispatch of troops from India to Basrah, and the placing of warships in that port. Such gestures might have complicated Qavam's situation with the Russians, but fortunately, after strong Persian protests to the British, a more friendly atmosphere was restored by the middle of the month.

At the time Qavam had braced himself to start preparing for the impending elections. After eventually achieving a form of agreement with the Azerbaijani rebels on 13th June, so that elections could at least be proceeded with on the 29th, Qavam indicated a new orientation of policy by suddenly founding a new Party of his own, the Persian Democratic Party, one of whose aims was to seek good relations with *all* the three Great Powers. This Party was, of course, to be the counterweight to the Tudeh, and be used to ensure that the Tudeh did not gain a majority in the elections. Qavam was preparing for the last stages of the game. Somehow the Tudeh was to be broken; some major diversionary tactic was to be deployed to recall the nation from its political flightiness. The tribes could be relied upon as a diversion and sure enough Bakhtiari plans to revolt against the Government were reported from Isfahan in September, Bakhtiari tribal chiefs accused of being incited by foreigners to create disturbances against the Tudeh Party. But this was only a bagatelle; and Qavam did not have relations with Bakhtiari Khans (in 1909 they had jailed him for a few hours on their arrival in Tehran; he must have disliked them very much) like the intimate relations he had personally with the Qashgha'i tribal leaders. The Qashgha'i tribes of Fars were, as Persians say, 'good with Qavam'. It was, therefore, significant that on 20th September this large and powerful confederation rose and carried the other tribes of Fars with it. There were not wanting Tudeh journalists to charge Qavam with having arranged this tribal outbreak. The tribal leaders sent demands to Tehran which were drawn up in association with notables of Shiraz, the provincial capital of Fars. The demands were all entirely anti-Tudeh. The Cabinet was to resign all but Qavam. Bakhtiari Khans whom the over-zealous Muzaffar Firuz had had imprisoned were to be released. Meanwhile the whole tribal insurrection was being explained, in Tehran and Moscow, as due to the machinations of the English. The latter were even charged with supplying the Qashgha'i with arms and ammunition from British warships in the Persian Gulf. If Ahmad Qavam was behind the

movement, it was useful to have the British to blame because this would keep the Russians off the scent. The British denied complicity.

Qavam remonstrated with the Qashgha'i warriors and their allies in the terms of an injured father; his threats to chastise them with 'armies' were couched in beautiful prose and in the gentlest tones. In the end, as the tribes took important garrison towns and also the port of Bushire, Qavam felt 'forced' to concede to their demands. In October the three Tudeh ministers withdrew; on the 19th Qavam re-formed his Cabinet without them. Muzaffar Firuz was sent as Ambassador to Moscow. Tudeh Governors in Tehran, Isfahan and Kirmanshah were dismissed, although the U.S.S.R. is reported to have protested. The decree for elections had been signed by the Shah on 6th October; the Head of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Middle East Department had been to Tehran in September, probably to remind Qavam that it was on 24th November that the draft Soviet-Persian Oil Agreement ought to be submitted to Parliament.

Qavam did not permit the elections to begin until 7th December, although he announced them early in November. The excuse for the delay was the continued disturbed state of the country; it was declared that the unsettled conditions would necessitate the elections being watched over by Government troops. In this may be discovered the skilful way in which Qavam was gradually employing every factor, including those apparently most opposed to the country's well-being, in his efforts to re-establish completely the authority of the Shah's government in Azerbaijan. He had turned the Qashgha'i rebellion to account to accomplish the dismissal of Tudeh and pro-Tudeh elements in his Cabinet and now he was to use the 'internal chaos' of the country, on the eve of elections, as the excuse for what was virtually a reconquest of Azerbaijan by Government troops. Under his token agreement with Azerbaijan's separatist regime, the latter had been permitted to appoint its own Governor-General of the province and this official was now formally notified of the decision to supervise the elections throughout the country with units of the Army. Government troops had already penetrated Azerbaijan as far as Zanjan, whence they were poised ready for the final step of marching on to Tabriz. In conjunction with this move Mr. George V. Allen, the United States Ambassador in Tehran, publicly proclaimed on 27th November 1946 that it was both right and in accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Charter for any government to send security forces wherever it wished in the country it administered. The Soviet Ambassador protested that there would be bloodshed if the government forces

moved further into Azerbaijan, but he could not press his protest too far in view of his country's desire to see the elections speedily completed, so that the proposed oil agreement might be ratified.

Great Britain meanwhile kept relatively silent; so far as she was concerned the outcome of the Soviet bid for an oil concession was a delicate matter, because an out-and-out Persian rejection of the Russian proposal on nationalist grounds could set off a chain reaction inimicable to other foreign concessions. America need have no such qualms, but Great Britain was in the ironical position of not being over-anxious to see the proposal to grant a foreign oil concession, even to the Soviet Union, made the subject of too much brouhaha and chauvinistic passion.[1]

From November 1946 onwards the Shah began to come more prominently into the picture. The Tudeh apologists later admitted that part of the ease with which Qavam had succeeded in duping them had been due to overestimation of the degree to which he would be hampered by bad relations with the Shah. But on the eve of the election Qavam was going to need the Army and already the Shah had thoroughly identified himself with it. Hence, when the Army's role in the elections was discussed on 23rd November, the Shah, as well as Qavam and the Army Commanders, was present. It was planned that the battalions were to move forward towards Tabriz and, later, the Shah himself was to make an aerial reconnaissance of the military situation in Azerbaijan. Thus in its penultimate stage a great statesman's game became a piece of glorification for the Army, although the last act was still reserved for the Majlis.

Azerbaijan was by degrees fully penetrated by Government troops and on 12th December the Provincial Assembly decided to abandon resistance. The royal forces entered Tabriz the next day. Pishevari escaped to the U.S.S.R., later to be reported killed in a car accident near Baku. Many of his colleagues were hunted out and killed in the none-too-pretty scenes in Tabriz during the first days of restoration of the Central Government's authority there.

Mahabad also fell and the Kurdish leader Qazi Muhammad and some of his followers were tried and hanged (on orders from Tehran) early one morning in the little main square of the town. Mulla Mustafa Barzani escaped to the Soviet Union and lived to see his Kurdish mountains again eleven years later.

Thus passed the 'Democrat' regimes of Azerbaijan and Mahabad, while things began to look very black for the Tudeh in Tehran and elsewhere. The Party Headquarters in Tehran were destroyed and

[1] See also, *Survey of International Affairs*, op. cit., p. 86.

the newspapers *Rahbar* ('Leader') and *Zafar* ('Victory') suppressed. Qavam's Persian Democratic Party sponsored a new trades union and measures were taken to smash the trades union net-work built up by the Tudeh. On 5th January 1947, the Tudeh Central Committee voluntarily divested itself of its powers and confessed its errors. Power had, it seemed, already begun its corrupting process, because in the redelegation of Tudeh Party offices, and especially in the breaking up of the trades union organisation, charges of graft and peculation were heard a great deal. They were not all only denigratory. The World Federation of Trades Unions was unable to put into effect a communist-inspired attempt to save the Tudeh trades unions of Iran from destruction; too many stigmas of corruption and indulgence in subversive political activities clung to the Iranian unions for unanimity on their fate to be possible in the W.F.T.U. A protest was made to the Persian Government, but, for better or for worse, the Trades Union Movement received a terrible set-back; in 1950 the words 'Trades Union' were still considered almost unmentionable, especially in the Oil Company.

Azerbaijan had, under its rebel Government, achieved certain reforms. There had been some land reform. The foundations of a promising university were laid in Tabriz. The police force became more honest and efficient. A maternity hospital was established. Redundant civil servants were reduced in numbers. But Tabriz was to have a few years in which to repent of its folly and for some considerable time its public services suffered neglect and its people were under constant watch. Azari Turkish school-books were destroyed (it was said, voluntarily by the school-children), as were Kurdish ones at Mahabad.

Using the disturbed state of the southern and south-eastern regions as an excuse, the Government managed to make the elections drag on until June 1947. Russian protests became increasingly violent, but Qavam was using the time to forge closer links with the United States. In December 1946 it was finally agreed that Iran should purchase a large quantity of U.S. surplus war material that had been left behind. In the same month, arrangements were completed for a very substantial amount of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's output to be purchased for the Eastern hemisphere by two major American petrol distributing concerns. Then in February 1947 the American firm of Morrison-Knudson was engaged by the Iranian Government to study the possibilities of a Seven Year Development Plan. For this a loan from the World Bank of 250 million dollars was talked of. When the Truman Doctrine made America responsible for military and economic advice and assistance

to Greece and Turkey, Iran was incorporated into the new Greece, Turkey and Iran Division of the State Department.

On 19th June Qavam reshuffled his Cabinet to form one markedly friendly to the West. On 20th June the United States granted a military credit of 25 million dollars. The Russians were becoming extremely bitter about their oil concession and sent Qavam a revised draft agreement, which he said he could not submit to the Majlis that had, at last, commenced electing its officers and examining its members' credentials (a process which can go on for months). It was at about this time that Great Britain sent a note to Qavam suggesting, in very governessy terms indeed, that he should not give the U.S.S.R. a 'blank refusal' over the proposed oil treaty, but 'leave the door open for further discussions', etc.[1] With that splendid failure to maintain a solid front which either bewilders or sends the Persians wild with glee, the United States Ambassador was constrained on 11th September publicly to dissociate his Government, on his Government's instructions, from what many in Tehran suspected, after the British note, to be a deal between Russia, Great Britain and the U.S.A. at Iran's expense.

Eventually on 22nd October 1946 Qavam entered the House and gave a long account of his negotiations with the Soviet Government. This resolution was then adopted by 102 votes to 2 :

1. The Prime Minister's negotiations for an Oil Agreement with the U.S.S.R. were null and void, but he would be exempted from the penalties the law of 2nd December 1944 provides against any minister who (on his own initiative) negotiates oil concessions with foreigners.

2. Iran would explore her oil resources during the next five years and exploit them with her own capital; should it be found necessary to engage foreign experts, they would be recruited from completely neutral countries.

3. If Iranian enterprise discovered oil, the Government might negotiate its sale to the U.S.S.R., the Majlis being informed throughout.

4. Iran would not grant concessions to foreign powers, or take foreigners into partnership in any oil company.

5. 'In all cases where the rights of the Iranian nation . . . have been impaired, particularly in regard to the southern oil, the Government is required to enter into such negotiations and take such measures as are necessary to regain the national rights, and inform the Majlis of the results'.

Item 5 was thought-provoking for the British Oil Concession-

[1] *Survey of International Affairs*, op. cit., p. 87.

aire in Khuzistan and Abadan, and indeed Qavam himself had occasion in those October days to muse a little on the nationalist emotions that were abroad in Parliament and outside. Less than two months later, on 1st December, 'the man who retrieved a province for Iran', as one of his admirers described him, failed to receive the Majlis's vote of confidence. He made a rather undignified broadcast appeal to nationalist emotions – Bahrain was mentioned and veiled threats made about the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company – but he was finished. His Cabinet had not been consulted over this broadcast and all but three resigned, as he did after another disappointing vote in Parliament of no confidence, on 10th December. On the 22nd Hakimi was voted back into office as Prime Minister and simultaneously it was announced that on 6th October the United States had agreed to send a military mission to improve the Persian Army. This agreement was to last eighteen months, with the possibility of extension. While it was in force, Iran was to engage other foreigners for duties with the Persian Army only if the United States agreed that she could. The Russians were out; the Americans, it would seem, were in. Qavam had done his work. It would soon be the turn of the Lion to be baited now that the Russian Bear had retired to nurse its wrath.

One more thing had come to pass: when Qavam's negotiating table was ultimately exchanged for the march of the Shah's Army into Azerbaijan, the Army found an opportunity to regain the honour it had lost in 1941. It could pose as the ultimate 'liberator' of Azerbaijan and the Shah could be proud of the uniform he wore; but still the most was owed to Qavam.

Chapter 25

The Night is Pregnant

GENERAL RAZM-ARA, who had been Prime Minister since 26th June 1950, was assassinated on 7th March 1951. He had been the Shah's choice as Prime Minister, which indicates a degree of royal influence on the country's political destinies that was, however, shortly afterwards to be severely tested. Though on assuming office he discarded his uniform and set aside military rank, Razm-Ara was a General of the Army, so that his appointment also pointed to the increased prominence of the Army since the Azerbaijan crisis of 1946, when General Razm-Ara had been one of those officers who distinguished themselves in the province's re-occupation by the Shah's forces. As suggested in the preceding chapter, this episode ushered in a period of enhanced prestige for the Army and also for the Shah, who was identified with the force his father had created.

By 1948 the Majlis's campaign against Ahmad Qavam proved that already the Court could sway a number of Deputies; once the Azerbaijan incident could be considered closed, it seems that the Court and some of its allies aimed at minimising the part played by the civilian, Qavam, in successfully restoring the province to the central government's control; and His Imperial Majesty the Shah's autobiography strengthens this supposition – the re-establishment, ultimately with a show of military force, of Tehran's authority over Tabriz provided an opportunity for the Shah that he could not afford to waste or leave to redound to the glory of an elder statesman.

At the beginning of 1948 an easing of tension was signalled by the lifting of Martial Law in Tehran in January, after it had been enforced for seven years. Now the occupation was at an end and rebels in the northwest were subdued. However, the Majlis still had the bit between its teeth and Prime Minister Hakimi's vote of confidence demonstrated how pointless such a vote from such an Assembly was when he failed to get any of the urgently needed post-war legislation passed. Hakimi's successor, 'Abdu'l Husain Hazhir, fared no better and could not get his budget accepted, so

that by the month of November 1948 yet another successor to Ahmad Qavam in the office of Prime Minister, the third since Qavam's retirement, was appointed. Three Prime Ministers in under twelve months boded ill for either the stability or post-war recuperation of the country, but during the term of Mr. Sa'id America came forward with a credit of ten million dollars for military expenditure and to this was added sixteen million dollars to pay for arms maintenance and shipment. Russian protests invoking the 1921 Treaty were met with firm answers and the right-wing seemed to be fully in command of the political arena. On 19th October a team of United States engineers arrived to begin surveys for planned development of resources, the firm, Overseas Consultants Incorporated, having been commissioned to lay the foundations for Iran's industrial and agrarian resuscitation in a Seven Year Plan. This attracted a further credit from the United States of twenty-five million dollars and the days of planning and of dollar aid had begun in real earnest.

The Soviet Union having suffered a rebuff, it may have seemed to some Iranian leaders time for a new reckoning of accounts with Great Britain. Already in December 1947 Iranian claims on Bahrain had been revived. They were based on a former Iranian suzerainty over the Bahrain archipelago, superseded since 1820 by British influence, a fact which made Iran's claims tenuous, did not the uncertain nature of earlier Iranian hegemony over the other side of the Persian Gulf already do so. In April 1948 the Majlis passed a bill reasserting Iran's right to Bahrain and empowering a commission to investigate the position. At first these moves might have seemed a little more than a diplomatic diversion, but by August it became evident that oil was at the back of them, when the Foreign Minister informed the Majlis that all agreements between two or more foreign states concerning Bahrain and the oil deposits there were, in the eyes of the Persian Government, null and void. Although American partnership with British interests in exploiting Bahrain's oil was rather awkward for the Iranians, the Foreign Minister's announcement was clearly aimed at Great Britain and was a sign that an argument with Britain over oil affairs generally was likely to begin in the near future. The Iranian offer of a 'reward' of £80,000, made in September 1948 to anyone who could 'restore' Bahrain to Persia and 'solve' the 'problem' of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, was not only further proof of an impending crisis over oil, but evinced the somewhat unrealistic spirit in which Iran might approach it.

At this time the Shah visited London, Paris and Rome, thus

displaying himself abroad as Iran's chief representative and leader, as if to continue efforts that he had made in his contacts with Allied leaders during the War, notably on the occasion of the Tehran Conference in 1943, when he tried hard to appear as his country's man of the future and no mere figurehead. It was unfortunate, in view of the events with which this and the succeeding Chapter will be mainly concerned, that on his first visit to London rumour had it that he was dissatisfied over certain points of etiquette; but whatever the impression he hoped to make abroad, at home there was as yet no great readiness to accede to him the role of being Iran's chief spokesman.

Some of his people were apathetic towards him and thought of him as still a rather shadowy figure. Others felt antagonistic towards him, though in 1948 probably only an extreme fringe indulged in feelings of positive hatred for the Shah. Broadly speaking, in Iranian politics violent and positive antipathy is only characteristic of fanatical fringe minorities because of the tendency to keep rival forces in balance and avoid open breaches. Serious clashes could result in a total breakdown of the social and political fabric, all the rival forces that are normally complementary to each other being swept aside. This might leave the country more vulnerable than usual to outside interference, an eventuality which the majority of Iranians, acting on the wisdom their history has taught them, instinctively strive to obviate. As it happens, the period dealt with in this and the succeeding Chapter saw in the end a resort to violence which threatened to result in an irreparable upsetting of the traditional balance of forces and groups, and which did bring perilously close the danger of just that foreign intervention Iranians dread so much. But as a rule Iranians prefer to wait on events and their politics are not action so much as gossip, rumour and intrigue, rivalries being kept in play and hopes of fruitful opportunity being retained so long as nobody is ever finally committed to anything; as one experienced Iranian once advised a younger man, 'Never take up too strong a position'. Thus infeasible promises and polite gestures are exchanged between the divers parties to a system of perpetual compromises. While no-one is exactly satisfied, no-one is willing to initiate action that might result in elusive hopes being once and for all proved vain; and in toppling over the whole political fabric, as nearly happened in Musaddiq's time, and as might happen again if a technocratic element gained too much power and led to a drastic reaction from other sectors of the Persian society.

The existence, however, of a fanatical element which may have been somewhat more than a fringe inimical to the Shah was start-

lingly revealed when, on 4th February 1949, a man posing as a press photographer fired five shots at the Shah during a royal visit to the University of Tehran. The fact of escaping with his life seems to have strengthened the Shah's belief in his mission and the sanctity of his person; certainly the state of his bullet-riddled uniform, now preserved in a glass-case in the Tehran Officers' Club, makes his escape from death seem very remarkable. Not only did His Majesty escape, but he was lightly enough injured to be able straightaway to take advantage of what had occurred and, in the midst of the buzzing and clicking of newsmen's cameras round his hospital bed, he began to seize some more of the elusive initiative; Martial Law, for example, was restored, while the arrest of communists again began.

It was also the moment the Shah chose to make a bid to curb the legislature's power to paralyse the executive and, after he had sounded a few elder statesmen on how to amend the Constitution, especially in those Articles that gave the Majlis scope for rendering Ministries ineffectual, a Constituent Assembly was convened. It is possible to imagine the kind of meetings that took place between His Majesty and some of the older politicians as a preliminary to amending the Constitution; the politicians consulted included people of the generation of Taqizadeh, who was one of those present at these meetings and who over forty years before had been one of those most involved in drafting the Constitution. Such men might have been able to enlighten the Shah on the intentions that had originally been behind their youthful zeal in the early days of this century; but it may be conjectured that they replied to the staccato enquiries of their young sovereign with considerable caution and reserve.

Election of the Constituent Assembly was speedily accomplished in March 1949 and its deliberations were promulgated on 8th May. The three most important decisions were that a Senate, which the Fundamental Law had from the beginning provided for, should be convened for the first time; that the Shah should have the power to dissolve both the Senate and the National Consultative Assembly on condition that he simultaneously issued the decree for fresh elections to be held, so that a new Parliament could assemble not more than three months after dissolution of the old one – this amended Article 48 of the Fundamental Law; thirdly, the Senate and the Majlis were set the task of introducing new procedural rules aimed at expediting the transaction of their business. A further amendment provided for the summoning of a Constituent Assembly 'whenever the National Consultative Assembly (the Majlis) and the

Senate separately vote by a two-thirds majority of all their members . . . the necessity of revising . . . specific articles of the Constitution . . . and His Imperial Majesty confirms the opinion of the Chambers . . .'

The attempt on the Shah's life, by bringing the figure of the king so strikingly into the limelight, had the effect of quickening the struggle for decisive power that had been going on ever since Reza Shah's abdication. It exposed the forces seething below the surface and it seemed as if a warning shot or some kind of starting-gun had been fired; but, though during the bout in the struggle for power that immediately followed, the advantage went to the Shah and his Ministers, in the end this only produced another and tougher round of opposition; and in 1949 it appeared that the Shah in his people's eyes still lacked the glamour whereby he might have reaped the full benefit of being the wounded hero. Very difficult problems remained to be tackled and one was the problem of oil. Revision of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Agreement had become imperative because of the industry's expansion during the War and also in the light of post-war Western concern for the advancement of countries whose lack of material well-being increased the danger of communism. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company seems to have desired revision of its Agreement no less than did the Iranian authorities. The more realistic among the latter, however, sensed that revision of the Company's arrangements with the Iranian Government would necessitate reaching some form of compromise with the Company; and to make a compromise with a foreign company would undoubtedly complicate the Iranian moderate politicians' position in relation to extremist opponents. Thus it was apparent that the usual balance of influences might, in the course of oil negotiations, be thrown into jeopardy, as a watchful opposition's criticism of those who were dealing with the Oil Company's negotiators gathered momentum and sought pretexts for making charges of treachery and submissiveness to foreigners.

Up to 18th July 1949 talks between the Company and the Iranian Minister of Finance proceeded satisfactorily until on that date a revised Agreement, named the Supplemental Oil Agreement or, after the Company's principal negotiator and the Iranian Minister of Finance, the Gass-Gulshayan Agreement, was signed. Up to this stage the atmosphere surrounding the talks was bland. It is possible that the Iranian side had striven to keep it so, endeavouring to allay any apprehensions on the Oil Company's side that the opposition was gathering strength and rejection of the new proposals, embodied in the Supplemental Agreement, becoming increasingly

likely. Out of courtesy and to give the English negotiators the impression that responsible Iranians could be realistic and achieve a compromise arrangement with the Company, it seems probable that the mounting pressure against acceptance of the Agreement was deliberately underrated by the Company's Iranian counterparts in the discussions; while unconcealed hostility to the Company in the Persian Press could be laughed off as coming from a wildly irrational and ultimately impotent minority.

Meanwhile, possibly in the interest of balancing the adoption of a conciliatory attitude towards a foreign company against the rising tide of nationalist feeling, the government that was about to ask Parliament to accept the revised Oil Agreement issued a decree severely limiting the freedom formerly enjoyed by foreign banking concerns in Iran. In January 1948 the sixty-year concession of the British Imperial Bank had ended and under a new government decree, besides having its name changed to become the 'British Bank of Iran and the Middle East', so that the offending word 'Imperial' was dropped, the Bank was henceforth to be an Iranian government authorised concern, subject in the normal way to Iranian Commercial Law.

Although on 28th July 1949 the executive was strong enough to have the first budget to be passed for six years accepted by the Majlis, nevertheless opposition opinion on the whole question of concessions to foreigners was becoming increasingly agitated; the Press, not unlike the National Assembly, was still strident and lusty in enjoyment of the freedom it had regained in 1941, and though the attempt on the Shah's life was followed by the introduction of a new Press Law, little attempt was made to control the organs that poured abuse on the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and were whipping up a high degree of xenophobia.

The Administration, however, had two possible means of attempting a diversion of the public's consciousness away from the unpopular issues being exploited by the opposition to the government and the Shah. Accordingly the widest possible publicity was given to the unanimous passing of a Majlis bill which transferred those parts not already distributed of the Shah's inheritance in land to an 'Imperial Foundation', as it was called, for charitable purposes. Secondly, the same month as the signing of the revised terms with the Oil Company also saw the launching of the Seven Year Development Plan. This was to cost about £137,000,000 at the rate of £20,000,000 a year, and the expected increased oil royalties were to go towards meeting this cost – a fact which the Government emphasised as a means of promoting popularity for the new Oil

Agreement. Additional funds were to come from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and it was announced that loans from Iranian banks and out of private investment were also anticipated.

Interesting though news of the Imperial Foundation's establishment and of the Seven Year Plan may have been, it was not the stabiliser the Government probably hoped it would be. The propaganda about distribution of estates for enlightened public service that accompanied the distribution of the Pahlavi Estates belonging to the Shah had only the negative effect of making other landowners suspicious; and many people remembered that a great portion of the House of Pahlavi's lands had been acquired under Reza Shah's dictatorship when no-one dared refuse the Shah's demands, so that in some quarters it was considered that what had been obtained so easily could just as easily be relinquished. The bill on the distribution of the royal estates had been passed by the Majlis with apparent joy, but this did not mean a great deal because, in a country where the gesture often counts for far more than the deed, there is a wide gulf between carrying out an act of Parliament and passing it : and in any event the landowning Deputies, while not averse to acquiescing in the diminution of the Shah's personal estates, might have considered themselves still in a strong enough position for this, the thin end of the wedge, to be prevented from going further and touching their own lands. Also, with the oil question in suspense, they had a potent means of obstructing other measures of land distribution as parliamentary and public attention became increasingly engaged in the matter of a foreign concession. The Shah's views on land distribution had much to do with the Majlis's subsequent preoccupation with the oil dispute, and with the support Dr. Musaddiq received for his oil nationalisation programme from normally conservative elements and the landed proprietors.

As for the launching of the Seven Year Plan for development, as the money to pay for it was in 1949 not available, this might be considered to have been premature; but its usefulness as a gesture, in connection with the promotion of a favourable reception to the revised Oil Agreement, has already been noticed and may be taken to account to no small extent for its timing. However, the 15th Majlis's term ended before the ill-fated 'Gass-Gulshayan' Supplemental Agreement could be ratified and in the meantime the new Plan Organisation, established to execute the Seven Year Plan, had to limit its first year's activities, in spite of an impressive published prospectus, to resumption of works on the railway left undone when Reza Shah abdicated, the lines from Mianeh to Tabriz and from

Shahrud to Meshed being given priority. Road reconstruction and irrigation works were also embarked upon and workers' co-operatives were set up, while studies were made for oil development in the north, presumably as a preliminary to ensuring national solvency by obtaining income from national, as opposed to foreign, exploitation of oil resources.

Certainly the period of discussion of construction schemes had begun : houses were to be built for the homeless and deserts were to be made into fertile areas of cultivation. These schemes were necessary for the urgently needed raising of material standards in Iran, and were in many instances promoted in all sincerity by the authorities concerned; but the fact remains that they were to a great extent politically motivated, as a counterweight to Press propaganda against the Shah's government and those foreigners who were believed to be keeping it in power for their own purposes. Secondly, development planning was the excuse for creating new organisations in which jobs could be provided for discontented professional men whom the overburdened Civil Service could no longer absorb. Development became more of a slogan than a fact; and a talisman by which dollars might be attracted.

Early in 1949 the financial situation had forced the Cabinet to act, one of the chief dangers being the continued soaring of prices, in which the upward trend of war-time had continued. The government attempted to meet this situation by raising the exchange value of the rial, which resulted in much irresponsible importing of goods but discouraged exports. The controls of Reza Shah's time on imports had largely disappeared so that it was now possible for the merchants' warehouses quickly to become glutted with foreign commodities. Prices did come down but local production suffered with resulting greater unemployment.

The increase in unemployment aggravated the already serious situation left over from a shift in employment patterns and temporary expansion of employment opportunities which had begun with Reza Shah's policy of industrialisation and public works, and been accelerated during the War. The Allies had provided many people with the chance of exchanging the old mode of subsistence livelihood, derived from agricultural work, for wage-earning work that fell off at the end of the Occupation and so created an immediate problem of unemployment. Anything tending to intensify this problem was disastrous and among the reasons for speedy inauguration of the Plan Organisation was, besides the absorption of a superabundance of officials, the hope that its operations would reduce unemployment generally.

Nobody in the influential classes of the community could remain unaware of problems like unemployment and the high cost of living and, in the light of the gravity of the situation, it would not be correct to view too cynically the struggle for political power that was by 1949 assuming the proportions of a major crisis. This struggle was not entirely due to the rival contestants' selfish motives and, though many if not most of them were anxious to retain old privileges and if possible acquire new ones, all of them knew how desperate conditions were becoming. A great difficulty was the low-ebb that had been reached in the sense of confidence between various groupings of society; each group thought that it alone could save the country and since Reza Shah's departure power, until then entirely in his hands, had not been satisfactorily redistributed, while the danger of communism had increased. The Shah's policy over his own estates had shown his eagerness for land redistribution, but this, in addition to the effects of communist agitation, could also bring the risk of peasant unrest, when landless cultivators were encouraged to hope for a share in the land and in consequence became restless and a further danger to stability; although the alienation of the land-owning classes from the Throne which also resulted from the Shah's views on land reform continued to pose a greater immediate threat to stability. By 1949 the chief protagonists in the impending clash were beginning, therefore, to emerge in the forms of the Shah on one side and the land-owners on the other, which put a fresh edge on the Shah's conflict with the Majlis, in which the landed interest was predominant. Combined with this interest were some of the tribal leaders, whose sufferings under the Shah's father made them fear any access of power to the Throne and kept them hostile to the reigning family.

Hence landowners and notably the Qashgha'i Khans grouped themselves, along with other and ostensibly much more liberal and more obviously nationalist coteries, behind Dr. Musaddiq. Musaddiq came into power in 1951 with a strange assortment of support, and in this an important catalyst must be supposed to have been a common fear of the recurrence of a royal dictatorship. To prevent this happening, the Shah could not be allowed to grasp the initiative in taking steps to save the country.

One of the elements in support of Dr. Musaddiq was the bazaar, whose merchants were amenable to religious as well as nationalist propaganda, especially as the sentiments implicit in the latter could be presented in a religious guise, because to a devout Muslim the foreigner is also the infidel. The bazaar was still the repository of strong religious feeling, and stagnation of trade and the economic

crisis in general could be explained as due to foreigners' attempts to go on exploiting 'the poor body' of Iran. At the same time, for political purposes the financial and commercial crisis could be attributed to increased government interference in commercial and economic affairs – shades of Reza Shah's era and of Dr. Millspaugh's last mission were evoked, while the Shah was suspected of submission to foreign influence. Thus the merchants were susceptible on a number of counts to forms of agitation on behalf of anti-Shah, anti-foreign, nationalist and liberal forces.

The stage was set in 1950 for Dr. Musaddiq, once he came out as the champion of Iran against foreigners and on behalf of the people's constitutional liberties, to be carried to power on a wave of popular emotion. As for the religious aspects of this emotion, at first he enjoyed the support of the compelling oratory of that old opponent of the British, the Mulla Kashani. When ultimately landowners, merchants and political extremists, as well as the religious classes, all became grouped behind Dr. Musaddiq, support for him meant also support for his National Front Party; although, as might be expected, it was the man who principally attracted this variety of allegiance, not his Party.

The political position in 1950–51 of two other groups remains to be considered. One was the new class of businessmen, different from the bazaar merchants; its rise began in Reza Shah's time and was continued by Iranian participation in the Allies' construction works during the War. The other was the Army. Though he pertinaciously attempted to gain it, control of the Army eluded Musaddiq; nor did he succeed in winning the support of many in the new class of entrepreneurs; and in fact it was a combination of leading members of this new commercial element with General Zahedi and units of the Army that finally brought about his fall from power in 1953.

In 1949 another bubble in the cauldron burst when the Prime Minister who had held office for a short time in the preceding year, 'Abdu'l Husain Hazhir, was shot by a religious fanatic. Hazhir seems from all accounts to have been an agreeable, sincere and enlightened young man and, though he may not have been a very significant figure, his tragic death was a sign of the times since he had not been free of the suspicion of being an intimate both of the British and of the Court. His murder could therefore be regarded as a threat to anyone who felt sympathy for the Shah or who was suspected of being influenced by the British.

Among the measures that the demise of the 15th Majlis left unpassed was a new Electoral Law designed to establish a literacy

test for voters and, though it had not received the Majlis's formal approval, it was supposed to apply to the new elections. These elections dragged on until 20th February 1950, for a period of no less than seven months. They had come at a most unfortunate moment because they afforded the forces of the opposition every opportunity to excite political passions; aroused political passion was to be the chief feature of Iranian politics for the following three years.

Towards the end of 1949, and as if to move in closer to the dénoument that now seemed imminent, the Soviet Union began friendly advances and in October agreed to sell Iran 100,000 tons of wheat. Protracted negotiations between Iran and Russia over the Caspian fisheries all of a sudden became unusually amicable, and Iran was also given reason to hope for the return of gold left in deposit in Moscow since the War. Increasing American involvement in Iranian affairs must also be regarded as a contributory cause of Russia's display of amity, for although Dean Acheson's declaration on 23rd March did not give Iran all she wanted from America, it was nonetheless a warning to Russia; Iran was brought under the same head as Korea and, with Korea and the Philippines, was to share in an aid grant of twenty-eight million dollars.

In November 1949 the Shah left for the United States in a plane put at his disposal by President Truman. During his visit the Shah informed his hosts that lands acquired by his father were all to be sold on easy terms to the peasants who cultivated them. This statement may be seen as part of his personal campaign 'to induce economic and educational circles in America to interest themselves in Iran so that American capital may flow in'; and such statements were no doubt intended to prove to American observers of Middle Eastern conditions that he knew the importance of land reform. His aim was clearly also favourably to influence American liberal opinion. He went further and affirmed that he would instruct his Government to proceed with the purchase of large estates in order to extend his programme of land distribution. If he gained American sympathy, the Shah could hope for American support for himself; for more aid to assist in Iran's development plans; and for a moratorium on criticism from those circles in the United States who were uneasy about increasing overseas commitments. He could appear the ideal and indispensable guardian of a country under the threat of communism and he could return home with money and, perhaps, greater prestige in the minds of his people. Unfortunately, however, his pronouncements in America about land reforms set the seal on Iranian land-owners' suspicions of him. He might favourably

impress Americans and his statements to them might receive applause in his own country, where words are seldom in short supply and can easily be greeted with a show of pleasure when their purport is less acceptable, but his alienation from one of the most adroit and most powerful elements in Iranian society now seemed complete.

Meanwhile Great Britain was receiving an increasingly approbrious press and criticism of British policy in Iran soon became a favourite topic in the debates of the 16th Majlis. A British agreement to indemnify Iran with over £5,000,000 for use of the railways during the War and the gift in July 1949 of two frigates to the Persian Navy did not have the effect of reducing anti-British feeling. Frigates would not, of course, capture the imagination of a people most of whom live far from the sea and whose economic plight they would in no way lessen. They were, moreover, described as scrap (which they were not) and regarded as replacements long-owed for Iranian vessels sunk or captured in 1941; though the latter were not comparable in size or value to the two frigates. The indemnity for use of the Trans-Iranian railway was scarcely commented upon in a press that was almost without exception hostile.

As the internal situation seemed to be becoming more formidable, and as Shahs before him had done at similar junctures, in 1949 the Shah showed an increased inclination to want to shine in the field of foreign affairs. He received visits from the Kings of Iraq, Afghanistan and Jordan, and from the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Perhaps he had the Sa'adabad Pact, his father's chief achievement in foreign politics, in mind. Certainly it must have been thought that state visits from neighbouring potentates would add lustre to the Throne, which endeavoured to keep the initiative in foreign affairs; and the conclusion of a transit agreement with Turkey, to facilitate the passage of Iranian goods through Trabzond and Iskanderoon, would surely help to win the people's loyalty and respect.

There was also the question of useful American support, but unfortunately, especially in the Shah's liberal-sounding assertions about the necessity for obeying the law, for land distribution, for hard work and anti-corruption measures, many people suspected that American influence on the Shah was greater than his on the Americans. When, despite the elections being incomplete, Parliament reassembled in February 1950, the speech from the Throne was full of references to reforms intended to improve the working of the Constitution and the lot of the peasants and labourers – bread, clothing and proper hygiene were promised to all and the

Seven Year Plan was to develop natural resources with benefits to be shared equitably among the whole nation. Royal speeches of this kind made those with vested interests ponder; why, if they did not look out, the land-owners would soon not dare visit their villages and would get nothing from them; and what were communists and socialists to think about a king who seemed himself to be more socialistic than they, and who had a throne from which to advertise the fact, and a broadcasting service at his disposal to spread news of his ideas to every village tea-shop in the country?

In 1950 up and down Iran the ordinary people were speaking well of the Shah and to most foreigners he seemed a promising enough ruler, sincere, serious and with youth on his side; but there was a darker side to this picture of benevolence towards Muhammad Reza Pahlavi. In those circles where poets and intellectuals were wont to smoke opium (which might often be provided, with beautiful porcelain pipes, by their wealthy old cronies), nasty rhymes about the Shah and his family were being recited and chuckled over, as opposition to him crystallised in cliques which presented an odd mixture of modernism and traditionalism, in a blending only a country like Iran could produce. And in the newspaper offices and cafés of Tehran, young men often spoke with contempt of their young contemporary who happened also to be Shah.

Since 1947, as has been seen, there had been a rapid succession of Prime Ministers, to which the appointment in June 1950 of General Razm-Ara might have been expected to call a halt. There were no grounds upon which the personality of this energetic, stocky little man could seriously be criticised. He was the sort of person Iranians are inclined to take to, with a touch of bonhomie, an accessibility, and a congenial and courageous manner which they appreciate. He adopted a disregard, which has become legendary, for the pomps of office, and towards the security precautions normal for a man in such an exalted position. He would receive petitions and listen to poor women who had some woe by which the skies were blackened over their heads and their days made unbearable. As Prime Minister he continued to ride his hack every morning on the outskirts of the capital just as any gentleman might do. He was an endearing person and as such unwelcome to those who sought to obtain, or to retain, power exclusively in their own hands, be they on the left or on the right.

The Tudeh Party had been outlawed but was still gaining secret adherants; in fact during the winter of 1950 certain Tudeh sympathisers were put under arrest. A Prime Minister appointed by the Shah and capable of winning the loyalty and affection of the masses

was of course the last thing the Tudeh Party desired, and extremists' apprehensions of Razm-Ara's danger to their cause was further aroused by his own contacts with some of the country's intellectual elements. For though he was a soldier he lacked neither intellectual attainments nor interest in cultural matters, and was related by marriage to one of the leading writers and intellectuals of the time, Sadiq Hedayat, whose sister was the General's wife. There is evidence that on the eve of his assassination Razm-Ara was cultivating contacts with the University of Tehran and among those men of letters who had been introduced to him by his brother-in-law; and that he was discussing problems of educational reform. It is possible that in this way Razm-Ara was beginning a process whereby forces of ideological influence might eventually have been recruited to serve the Shah and his Prime Minister, instead of standing aloof and indulging in making clandestinely circulated lampoons against them.

On becoming Prime Minister Razm-Ara promptly issued a press-release which underlined the plans for reform that had been announced by the Shah in his speech of February, on opening Parliament; particularly the measures which were to be taken against corruption. His first public utterances seemed so full of promise for the future that the pessimist among foreign observers could not help wondering, so early in his period of office, just how long he would be allowed to survive. His plans touched upon so many powerful interests and, if achieved, would be so detrimental to them that it seemed at once probable that one or other of the groups who would be affected would plot his downfall.

The measures announced included the establishment of provincial, district and village councils; elimination of unemployment; the guaranteeing of the independence of the judiciary; and the balancing of the budget. The new government received a vote of confidence of 95 votes to 8 and, whatever the pessimist may have foreseen, its chances of a long and effective period in office did seem good. But this was to reckon without the problem of oil and, nine months later, on 7th March 1951, 'Ali Razm-Ara fell to the assassin's blow and was described a few days later as a traitor and agent of the British. In August 1952 the Majlis went so far as to pass a motion demanding his assassin's release from prison. This bizarre bill received the Royal Assent on 10th November of the same year, but was later repealed.

Chapter 26

What One Man Can Do

THE man chiefly responsible for the startling changes in events which were triggered off by Razm-Ara's assassination was Muhammad Musaddiq, formerly Musaddiqu's-Saltanah. The most potent factor in giving him his immediate pretext for action was provided by the 1933 Agreement between the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the Iranian Government, by which the Company obtained a renewed and modified concession to extract, refine and market oil from southwest Iran. The ingredients in the political situation which gave Musaddiq scope to do what he did were the accumulated sense of hopelessness prevalent among the Iranian people; the inability of post-war governments to stop economic deterioration; the growing tension between, on the one hand, the Crown, on the other, the Majlis and the land-owners; and the belief of the Tudeh Party and the religious extremists that they might severally profit from the absence of stability and delayed resolution of the problem of who should wield power.

Razm-Ara, however, had inaugurated a period during which it seemed that the Government might retrieve and keep the initiative. For a time the Majlis seemed to have become acquiescent in whatever the Prime Minister proposed to it. A case in point was the campaign against graft. Razm-Ara's administration seemed on the verge of becoming strong enough to stop the freedom for graft which had been enjoyed ever since 1941 by men whose chief base of operations had in reality been the Majlis itself. This body had nevertheless, no doubt partly in pursuance of the principle that the best way to obviate untoward conclusions is to shape conclusions oneself, set up a committee to investigate corruption, and also overcrowding, in the Civil Service; but doubtless the Committee had never anticipated that its findings need be fully or effectively implemented, for under a weak executive there was no reason why they should be. But Razm-Ara's zeal altered this and left the Majlis with no alternative but to annul the report of its own committee; his executive was seen not to be of a kind content simply to see it filed away in the National Assembly's archives.

The Assembly's impasse over the report on administrative corruption came at a moment when the Majlis felt itself in a weak position and when Razm-Ara's energy was becoming daily more alarming to many well-entrenched interests. In the airing of serious charges against influential officials that the debate on the report had caused, and in the atmosphere of recriminations, embarrassing probes and intensifying suspicions that resulted, it was convenient to have the larger publicity-attracting oil question to fall back upon as another topic for debate. The Assembly, therefore, turned with vigour to the problem of the still unratified Supplemental Oil Agreement.

Razm-Ara told Parliament that he approved of the terms of the Supplemental Oil Agreement, but in June 1950 the special Majlis commission which had been formed to study the new Agreement, rejected it, with the result that the bill that had been laid before the House for ratification of the Agreement was withdrawn. However, the Prime Minister undertook to reopen negotiations with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the Company advanced the Iranian Government £14,000,000 on account for royalties in the current year. In other words, it did not yet seem that any kind of deadlock had been reached and indeed, after Razm-Ara had been in office six months, it seemed possible to be optimistic. The worst appeared to be over—exports were rising, new commercial treaties were concluded with other countries and foreign trade missions were arriving. But scarcely any of the promised reforms had so much as been attempted and the Tudeh Party, through activity ostensibly related to the Stockholm Peace Resolution, which attracted many young Iranians, was able to maintain close contact with a number of people, especially in urban centres.

On 18th December the comparative calm that prevailed was suddenly disturbed by news of the abduction of a group of fairly important Tudeh prisoners from a prison near Tehran, which some supposedly Tudeh Party members had entered for this purpose disguised in army uniform. The episode received surprisingly wide publicity in the Press, so that the damage it did to the Government's growing prestige was made the most of, and those who had been thinking that Razm-Ara was successfully introducing more stability into the political situation had to think again. But in external relations hopeful signs continued to appear. A revival of trade talks with Russia gave hope of the economic plight in the northern provinces being alleviated, and in October 1950 Iran was the first country to benefit from United States aid under Point IV with, in the first instance, an annual grant of 500,000 dollars. It might,

however, have occurred to some that the difficulties which trade talks with the Soviet Government ran into were a pointer to a slight hardening in the Soviet attitude.

The year 1951 opened with preparations for the Shah's marriage. In February he made Miss Soraya Isfandiari his wife. As she was the daughter of a leading member of the Bakhtiari family, by a German lady, the marriage seemed, besides being a love-match, to preclude future Bakhtiari hostility to the Shah and to mark the readiness of these tribal leaders to forget their experiences at the hands of his father.

In the same month the Oil Company's proposal to renegotiate a revision of the 1933 Concession on the basis of an equal division of profits was not accepted. The Majlis Oil Commission had continued its deliberations after the Supplemental Agreement's rejection and now had Dr. Muhammad Musaddiq as Chairman. On 19th February it became known that the Commission had taken the drastic decision to nationalise the entire oil industry.

So far as Razm-Ara was concerned this proposal took the oil question, which he was anxious to settle to Iran's greatest possible advantage, out of the realm of practical politics; empty gestures meant nothing to this sensible and practical officer and fingers began to point at the man who seemed unable to share in the popular enthusiasm for nationalisation. As we have seen, on 7th March he was killed, by one of the religious extremists called the *Fidayan-i-Islam*, Islam's Sacrifices. The next day, 8th March 1951, the Majlis approved the nationalisation proposal of Dr. Musaddiq's Oil Commission without any appreciable show of opposition, for who was going to risk being shot? In the atmosphere of unreality which clung to these steps, in connection with a complex industry few in Tehran knew anything about, it is probable that many of the Deputies thought there would be time later to temporize over the execution of nationalisation and that, for the moment, accepting the proposal meant only making a defiant gesture by which to placate more ardent nationalists.

By the end of March a nationalisation bill had been passed by the Majlis and Senate and become law. This disregarded the fact that the 1933 Concession, concluded under the auspices of the League of Nations, could not be annulled by unilateral action, and included provision for any dispute between the contracting parties going to arbitration. The Attlee Government in England responded to news of the bill with caution; whilst prepared to recognise the principle of nationalisation, it urged that a way be worked out to ensure that the Iranian people's wishes were satisfactorily met while the oil industry continued to operate without hindrance.

Before this response could be communicated to the Iranian Government, Dr. Musaddiq, after a short interval when Husain 'Ala was Prime Minister, had succeeded Razm-Ara. This was the choice of the National Assembly rather than of the Shah and indicated that the Majlis was once more in the stronger position. When the 16th Majlis had been convened a year before, members for the Tehran constituencies had still not been returned because of voting irregularities. In the delay thus occasioned in completing the Tehran elections, Musaddiq and his National Front Party had gained extra time in which to make capital out of violent anti-British and anti-Oil Company propaganda. As a result the National Front contestants had been returned with a big majority and Musaddiq had been able to assume the chairmanship of the Majlis Oil Commission, while the presence of a crowd of rowdy constituents in his support outside the very doors of the Assembly helps to explain the enormous influence he exercised over his fellow Deputies.

Musaddiq had for many years enjoyed a reputation for being a patriot and intransigently honest. One of those who had voted against Reza Shah's assumption of sovereignty in 1925, he was not one who had ever become reconciled to the new dynasty; he would not be suspected of being influenced by the Court, and he was, in addition, by birth a member of the land-owning élite. Many of the land-owners might have felt qualms over Musaddiq's support from the hooligans of Tehran outside the doors of the Majlis, and over some of the less respectable National Front Deputies who had entered the House with him; but conservatives might have derived some comfort from the fact that the record of his life showed evidence of his being in quite good favour with the British.

Evidence that this was so was not excessive, but the belief remained that Musaddiq was not totally unacceptable to the British, and it may be emphasised that this would weigh heavily with many influential Iranians in making them decide to go along with him. As a matter of fact the *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939, First Series Vol. XIII* recently published contain a telegram on page 628 from Norman, the British envoy in Tehran in October 1920, to Lord Curzon, which speaks of a report that Musaddiqu's-Saltanah was 'honest, intelligent, well-educated, capable and very friendly to us', and other British comments about him in the inter-war years tell the same story. Thus there were grounds, as late as 1951, for supposing that he was regarded in a friendly light by the British. In Persian conditions this would have an importance of great proportions, sufficient to decide confused and anxious Deputies of the old school of Iranian politicians. For it is worth remembering

that these older men belonged to a world subject to traditional impulses that have not been known in public life in Europe for centuries. Some of them, for example, still lived in a world that was believed to be governed by cosmological influences, by supernatural forces and by 'what is written', by Destiny. These old men – there were several of them in the Majlis – would not necessarily have been able to explain the remnants of old traditions which shaped their attitudes; but nevertheless they remained susceptible to suggestions of an order that would be beyond the average Westerner's comprehension. As they sat in their assemblies playing with their rosary-like beads, whose liturgical purpose is hardly less than that of concealing mental preoccupations and emotion with a play of the hands, these old men were incapable of thinking analytically about present issues or of deducing the future consequences of present acts. If this was the case among the people's representatives, it is not a matter for astonishment that during the period when Dr. Musaddiq was Prime Minister the people themselves adopted attitudes that shocked Western observers and often seemed far less explicable and far more irrational than in fact, in the light of history, they were.

It was comforting for more conservative elements to find excuses for submitting to Dr. Musaddiq on the lines of 'what will be, will be', and in the belief that somehow he might after all be working the will of the British; it may sound incredible, but many Iranians did suspect this. But in addition there was the mob : Deputies were intimidated into adopting a pro-Musaddiq position and as time went on Deputies and others who were not thought to be in accord with his policies were apt either to be assaulted in the streets or to receive threatening letters.

The Shah, it seems, was caught off-balance by the sudden conjunction of forces in Musaddiq's favour – his command of xenophobia excited by the oil dispute and his ability to profit alike from the support of the conservative élite, from religious extremists and from left-wing agitators. The Shah had to acquiesce in the drama of what looked like Iran's economic cutting-off of her own nose, and which was enacted step by step until the last members of the Oil Company's British technical staff left Abadan on 4th October 1951 and the great refinery there became silent and unproductive. A bill had been passed on 1st May 1951, called the Nine-Point Law, which made this departure of the British the more inevitable; although between May and October there had still been reason to hope that some settlement might be reached and the oil industry saved from coming to a halt.

Such hopefulness erred on the side of optimism, however, because Dr. Musaddiq's Nine Points had about them enough of his own peculiar flair for the irrevocable and legally uncircumventable to give a foretaste of the sad tale of deadlock that was to be the reading, first of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's directors who went to negotiate in Tehran, and subsequently of Mr. Richard Stokes and Mr. Harriman, who also visited that city, and of Mr. Truman and Winston Churchill, both of whom from afar were eventually compelled to communicate with Dr. Musaddiq.

The Nine Points included first of all an answer to the obvious question about who would be able actually to carry out nationalisation of the oil industry; a Board was to be formed for this purpose, consisting of five Majlis Deputies, five Senators and the Minister of Finance or his representative. Secondly, the A.I.O.C. was to go and leave in Iran a deposit of 25 per cent of net current oil revenues, in order that the Iranian Government would have a fund from which to meet any claims made later by the Company. This item elicited the British Government's explanation that, though it accepted the principle of nationalisation – a Labour Government could hardly not do so – it would consider appropriation of the Company contrary to the 1933 Concession Agreement. The Iranian retort to this was that nationalisation by law could override the state's agreement with a private firm or private persons, and that, in any event, Dr. Musaddiq did not regard the British Government as having any status in the dispute and was not therefore interested in its views on the subject. Another point was that foreign experts in the oil industry were progressively to be replaced by Iranians. The point was also made that preference would be shown to former, customary purchasers of Iranian oil in future commercial dealings under the Iranian Government.

These two points out of the nine appear to show that Musaddiq himself was still hoping to get the best of two worlds in so far as the reference to foreign experts indicated that he intended retaining if possible A.I.O.C. technicians; and reference to meeting the requirements of old customers showed that he counted on continuing trading in oil, the customers paying as usual, to keep his government solvent. Members of the A.I.O.C.'s British staff were invited to stay on and work for the Iranian Government, with the promise that the same conditions of service as those they had with the Company would continue. As far as is known only one Englishman thought seriously of accepting this invitation; but in any case it would have entailed breaking engagement contracts between the A.I.O.C. and

each member of the staff, and an uncertain future in Iran was not very appealing.

In August 1951 efforts were made by the British and the Iranians, with the good offices of Mr. Averell Harriman on behalf of the United States, to negotiate a formula satisfactory to both sides. These negotiations were based on what was known as the 'Harriman Formula'. The British team was led by the Right Hon. Richard Stokes, who was Lord Privy Seal. He was preceded to Tehran by Mr. Harriman, who had to persuade the Iranians to agree to discussions with a British Government representative, to be regarded for the purpose as acting on behalf of the 'former' Company. The Stokes Mission failed and it was then that the point of no return was reached, the main difficulty being that, though the British negotiators expected to be able to work on the basis of the one-paragraph nationalisation law of 20th March 1951, the Persians took the Nine Point Law of 1st May as the basis for discussion. With this law as his starting point, Dr. Musaddiq insisted that the negotiations should ultimately crystallise round the three issues of (1) Compensation arrangements for the, by implication, expropriated Company; (2) Replacement of British experts; and (3) Arrangements about sales to former purchasers of Persian oil. This last point added an extra element of farce to the whole procedure because it ignored the vital consideration that all the shipping and marketing organisation for the oil of Iran was in the hands of the Company and its subsidiaries, and the subject of a complex system of international arrangements and price adjustments.

On his arrival in Tehran on 15th July 1951, Mr. Harriman had witnessed some of the worst demonstrations that Tehran had ever known; twenty people were killed and some three hundred injured in clashes between National Front supporters and those of the Tudeh Party outside the House of Parliament. On 22nd July Musaddiq's own erratic behaviour might have indicated that already his nerve was shaken by these ugly incidents, for he suddenly announced that the Chief of Police was to be court-martialled for two simultaneous but incompatible enough misdemeanours for it to be supposed that one might have cancelled out the other: he was charged with failure to control the demonstrations of 15th July and also with having wrongly allowed the Police to fire on the demonstrators. On 16th July Musaddiq had invoked Martial Law himself, only to revoke it six days later. Therefore it seems clear that by the time the jovial Mr. Stokes arrived in the next month, the Persian Prime Minister was in fact not in any position to reach any sort of agreement with either the British Government or a

British company: Musaddiq was already a frightened man, in terror of the popular hysteria he had himself done so much to arouse. It is in retrospect not surprising that during a week of negotiations, in the palace of Qaraniyeh outside Tehran, Musaddiq's attitude was thoroughly though tortuously negative, as he spent the time running up and down the agenda, agreeing to one point and then returning to it later only to withdraw agreement. Any concession to the British was out of the question: political passions had already been unleashed which were beyond Musaddiq's control.

The ousting of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had made every Iranian, even the most conservative, feel a thrill of pleasure in what seemed a long-deferred act of defiance and triumph. The activities of the Tudeh, the threat of the Fidayan-i-Islam extremists and the rabble-rousing oratory of Mulla Kashani were disagreeable aspects of the situation, but they were accompanied by a universal sense that the frustration, humiliation and feeling of impotence and degredation suffered by Iran for over a century had somehow at last ended; caricatures of John Bull being kicked into the Persian Gulf found a ready response in the heart of every Iranian, no matter who. Also there was another feature of the situation noticeable in Iran in those heady days of the summer of 1951. It was shrewdly remarked upon by a foreign correspondent when he said that what he could not understand about the Iranians was their apparently innate national yearning for what he called 'self-immolation'.

The heyday of national self-assertion, however, was to have its price; the squeeze, administered by the more powerful to the weaker, had inevitably to begin. Great Britain continued to fulfil certain obligations to Iran, with the addition, seldom mentioned and known only to a few, of certain supererogatory acts of generosity, until after the oil dispute had gone as far as the Security Council. On 12th October 1951 Musaddiq himself pleaded Iran's case before the Security Council in New York. On the 19th the Council decided by eight votes to Russia's one to postpone consideration of the issue pending a decision by the International Court of the Hague on the question of an international organisation's competence in the matter.

Finally Great Britain withdrew the special facilities Iran had been permitted for the conversion of sterling into dollars. Licenses for the export to Iran of materials such as sugar and steel rails were also withheld; but despite these indications that the British could exercise gradually extending economic pressure, the British Bank of Iran and the Middle East stayed on in Iran until Musaddiq's own pressure forced it out in July 1952.

The effects of the squeeze and the cessation of oil revenue were noticeable very soon and already in the summer of 1951 foreign exchange was restricted to urgent government requirements and the prices of sterling and dollars had risen rapidly. The British Bank lost the right to deal in foreign exchange and an amount equivalent to £14,000,000 was withdrawn from currency coverage and eight million dollars were purchased from the International Bank. Sums gained in this way were exhausted by the end of 1951 and it was clear that political emotions did not reach as far as people's pockets when an appeal for a loan from the nation contributed only a fraction of the vast amount in rials which the Government had expected.

Sayyid Ziau'd-Din Tabataba'i revived the National Will Party as the economic situation's seriousness became more apparent, but his opposition to Musaddiq and the National Front could make no headway, especially as the latter still had the support of a demagogue like the Mulla Kashani, a past-master at inflaming the most irrational and emotional passions of the populace in Tehran, wringing out to the last drop popular feeling that Iran was a martyr whose martyrdom was entirely due to the machinations of foreigners and their treacherous Persian friends. Like Sayyid Zia that other great statesman of former times, Ahmad Qavam was powerless to do anything against his stormy petrel of a cousin, Musaddiq. In the hot days of 1951 Qavam summoned his physician and eye-specialist, who was a young man. He asked him whether he thought the heat of Tehran *in these days* good for his elderly, and eminent, patient's health, and the physician, with great presence of mind, promptly replied that a journey abroad would be most beneficial. Qavam embraced him: 'You were always a most tactful young man', he said, and left for Europe to have his eyes seen to.

The days were also very warm for Musaddiq, for whose impeachment the Deputies in opposition to him ventured to begin collecting signatures, profiting from growing anxiety about the deteriorating financial situation. But they too might just as well have gone with Qavam to Geneva: the Tehran gangs came out in support of Musaddiq and the offices of newspapers believed to be in sympathy with the opposition were, with only one exception, destroyed. No effort was spared to keep alive popular hatred of the Oil Company, and the land-owners still seemed to prefer Musaddiq to the possibility of the Shah's being left free to promote land reform.

Musaddiq's journey in October 1951 to New York gave him the opportunity of exploring international contacts and, as Britain was the enemy, he directed his attention to cultivating friendship with

Egypt, like Iran hostile to Britain. He visited Cairo on the return journey from New York and in December, in spite of the normally good relations between them, Iran noticeably cooled towards Israel. Very little in fact resulted from his rapprochement with an Arab country; broadly speaking there is too much bad blood between the Persians and the Arabs for much to have resulted from Musaddeq's cordiality towards Egypt. In the event, Arab oil-producing countries benefited enormously from Musaddiq's policies. They provided more oil to make up for the gap in supplies left when the flow of Persian oil ceased, and it was not in the Arabs' immediate interest to court Musaddiq's friendship at the expense of the goodwill of the Western Powers.

Of more significance than Musaddiq's much-publicised reception in Cairo and attempts to win over the hearts of the Egyptians was the opening of an Iranian Legation in Prague. Czechoslovakia became one of those countries which the Iranians cited as possible purchasers of oil it proposed selling out of stocks abandoned in Abadan by the Oil Company in 1951. The Company's lawyers had to polish their telescopes and begin scanning the oceans for stray tankers that might be freighted with oil the Company considered its own, stolen from it by the Iranian Government.

The Soviet Union's position in relation to Iran's nationalisation of oil was somewhat analagous to the position of Great Britain in relation to Soviet attempts to obtain an oil concession in northern Iran in 1946. The U.S.S.R. no doubt found Dr. Musaddiq's measures the less welcome because the Russian-held Caspian Caviare Concession of 1926 was due for renewal in 1952 and, nationalisation so much the vogue in Iran, it seemed likely that renewal of any type of concession might run into difficulties. Also, the U.S.S.R. had no particular reason to feel sympathetic towards Dr. Musadiq; he it was who in 1944 had instigated the bill in the Majlis whereby even preliminary discussions with foreign powers interested in gaining concessions for oil in Iran were prohibited until the end of the Occupation; and Musaddiq had also been in the forefront of the National Assembly's rejection of the Russian proposals for the exploitation of oil in the north of the country in 1947. The Soviet Ambassador did offer to supply Iran with some of the goods licences for whose export to Iran Great Britain had stopped: it was suggested that Russia could supply sugar and piece-goods in exchange for Persian rice and wool. This was no great gesture, however, because in effect it would only have been to carry out the Russo-Iranian Trade Agreement of 1950. Caution was the main feature of Russia's attitude in 1951 and Soviet observers could

not fail to notice Musaddiq's own tendency to say that his movement was really the Orient's spearhead against communist encroachment; his thesis being that the West should be grateful to him for advocating a vigorous nationalism in Iran and for strengthening democracy there in such a way that a communist revolution might be averted.

In 1952 the International Bank's proposals for resuscitating the Iranian oil industry were not accepted because the Bank reserved the right to employ for the purpose technicians from any of its subscribing countries, and Musaddiq refused to have technicians from Britain. On 7th August Musaddiq took the initiative in an attempt to resolve the deadlock and addressed a Note to the British, to which Truman and Churchill jointly replied. It seems that their proposals were not properly understood by the Doctor; at least he made no effective attempt to meet them.

Throughout the period British and American officials might have been caused anxiety by visits to Tehran of American oil speculators, who gave the impression of seeking to take advantage of the deadlock existing between the Iranians and the world's major oil companies. The latter, as represented by large British and American concerns, maintained a remarkably steady unity of outlook and action during the dispute once Musaddiq's apparent obduracy had become evident, and their respective governments acted in similar accord with each other. Had the Iranians hoped to drive a wedge between Britain and America, they were to be disappointed; the lack of amity and mutual understanding which had appeared to exist between the British and American Ambassadors in Tehran at the outset of the crisis was not representative of the policies of their two governments as displayed from the summer of 1951 to the end of the struggle.

As the days of 1952 slipped by and no oil was sold from Iran, Dr. Musaddiq's position became increasingly difficult. He had succeeded in delaying the Majlis elections which were again due and a vote of censure against him that some of the bolder Deputies had managed to bring about in December of the preceding year had been evaded when seventeen sympathisers of his prevented a quorum being formed by staying away from the session. An attempt to impeach the Minister of the Interior had also failed because the Acting Minister, who happened to be Musaddiq himself, did not go to the House; he was, incidentally, holding this portfolio in anticipation of the impending elections and had taken it from General Zahedi. The latter withdrew in readiness for later and crucial action.

It is possible perhaps to date the beginning of the Prime Minister's disenchantment with the Majlis from 24th June 1952. In May elections were held up pending his return from The Hague. On his return, on 24th June, he declared that the elections in more than fifty constituencies would *not* be resumed because, as he bluntly put it, fair elections were impossible. In this rather sweeping statement may be discerned the beginnings of a new phase in the many-faceted internal political struggle. The Doctor was probably already beginning to conjecture that he would ultimately have to go it alone : men who become too powerful in Iran generally have to in the end. The assortment of forces on which they rise begin to disintegrate, running in different directions in pursuit of their individual ambitions.

Another sign was the election by the new Majlis of the rightist and royalist Doctor Emami as President, the National Front candidate being rejected. Yet when Musaddiq resigned, as was traditional on a new Parliament being convened, he received a returning vote from the House. How little use the Senate was being to the Shah was demonstrated when that body also voted him back as Prime Minister, although it did ask about his programme. And so, on 11th July, the emotional old lawyer was back in office. He then evinced his suspicions of the National Assembly, and of every other potential political rival, by demanding very wide powers. The Majlis showed signs of restiveness, but the gangs were still a force outside and Deputies did not want to be lynched or blinded with acid in the streets. It seemed that he might have won the day, but now he had another great confrontation. He told the Shah that he wanted the portfolio of the War Ministry. The Shah could not allow this. Musaddiq resigned.

It is related that the British Chargé d'Affaires – England had nc Ambassador in Tehran at this time – went fishing in the beautiful Lar Valley, high in the hills a long way north of Tehran, in a place that could only be approached by horse or mule and where there is no telephone. If this story is true, it was a wise move. But unfortunately the mystique of the British could not so easily be denied its power in the Persian imagination : it is unlikely that the British Head of Mission's fishing holiday scotched the supposition that it was he who had arranged who should be the next Prime Minister. In any event it did not prevent Qavam falling, after only four days in office, under the calumny of, among other things, being a British tool.

Qavam was very old and did not seem to care very much; if he did, he did not show it. When prompt measures were essential he rose late and, when not in bed, was apt to doze off in the middle of

important discussions. Qavam had belatedly awakened to the fact that somebody somewhere had given the order for the police and troops to remain in barracks; information which caused him to show emotion for the first and only time during his brief tenure of office. He is reported to have blanched and to have said that he could do nothing but resign. He may have suspected some final treachery; and that, not necessarily engineered by Musaddiq or by those who wanted Musaddiq back. Dr. Musaddiq was again in office on 22nd July, after hideous rioting in the streets of the capital.

The Majlis now utterly reversed its policy. Musadiq was given complete powers for six months in economic, banking, judiciary, administrative, financial and even military matters. A bill was approved for Qavam's trial and the sequestration of most of his considerable wealth. Dr. Emami, unable to continue as President of the Majlis, fled to Geneva; Kashani was selected in his place.

The Senate made some kind of a stand : it proposed that Musaddiq's 'full powers' should only be exercised in consultation with a mixed parliamentary committee, but the Doctor stood his ground and the Senate relaxed its demands, though its judicial committee held out against the bill for the release of Razm-Ara's murderer and delayed the passage of the bills against Ahmad Qavam. (Nobody need, probably, have worried too much about Qavam's case : nowhere more than in Iran does the adage about blood being thicker than water hold good and it seems evident that his cousin, Musaddiq, never really intended Qavam too much harm. Threats were the chief thing. It was given out that Qavam had fled to Baghdad, but in fact, until he eventually went to Europe, he was never more than a few miles away from Tehran.)

But what was it, pusillanimity again? Confusion worse confounded by conflicting instructions from the Palace? It is hard to say, but in September the Senate caved in and gave Musaddiq a unanimous vote of confidence. There was probably a combination of all the factors suggested above with the addition of love of being, no matter which, a Senator or a Deputy. It was so useful, possibly lucrative as well, to be a member of Parliament in Iran, in spite of the threats and dangers with which at this period Deputies and Senators were beset. Moreover, the Senate felt that it was threatened with extinction if it did not submit to Musaddiq's demands. Ironically, its submission did not save it. On 23rd October the Majlis passed a bill reducing the term of the Senate from six to two years and when this received the royal assent the Senate was automatically disbanded, because its time had already expired. No date was fixed for a new Senate to be convened.

The destruction piecemeal of various components of the nation's parliamentary institution had its grim corollary in the continued menaces of the mob, the parliamentarians' fear of which accounted for their acquiescence in steps to destroy Parliament, their fear predominating in the end over their aversion to the measures which Musaddiq was now bent on having passed. And yet it is significant that bills to remove the Senate, release Razm-Ara's assassin, prosecute Qavam and so on were interrupted while, on 23rd October, a decree was slipped out making strikes illegal. The Doctor was striving, it would seem, to remount the tiger's back. In November martial law was extended for a further two months; except for two days in August, Tehran had been under martial law since April.

Another sign of Musaddiq's positive intentions was his initiation of reforms by decree. In October an earlier ruling was superseded by a decree ordering the deduction of 20 per cent from the landlord's share of crops. Half the proceeds were to be allotted to the peasants and half for rural improvements, schools and irrigation being mentioned specifically. In September another decree abolished military and special courts and ordered judicial reforms. The judiciary was to be cleansed of corrupt officials; its independence was to be assured; judges' salaries were to be raised. Another decree ordered taxpayers in arrears to be arrested and their property confiscated. In the circumstances none of these well-intentioned measures could be made very effective.

In September Dr. Schacht, the famous Nazi-German financial expert, was prevailed upon to visit Tehran. He deplored the issue of more notes and privately averred that one of Iran's troubles was laziness. His words were without effect and Musaddiq ignored Schacht's advice about currency control.

By the end of the year the Tudeh Party was becoming more overtly active and some arrests were made.

Although he repeatedly said he had no quarrel with the ordinary people of Britain, Musaddiq and his Government intensified the process of translating into action threats and abuse which had been hurled by the press against the British since before his accession to power and to a greater degree after it. He refused to accept a new British Ambassador who had been either in Iran before or in a colonial country and on 9th January 1952 his Government gave British consular posts until the 21st of the same month to withdraw. Consulates in the provinces had always been suspected as centres of British intrigue and political interference and, when the British protested that unilateral closure of them was contrary to Article 9

of the Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1857,[1] and demanded an explanation, vague allegations of 'interference' were indeed what followed. These were not groundless, but most of the incidents referred to were fairly ancient history and in a sense it was appropriate that they should be, because the closure was, after all, one of the final acts in a drama that had been unfolding itself since the early days of the nineteenth century, and whose catastrophe had been long postponed, such extreme steps as were now being taken not having been resorted to even in the time of Reza Shah. For, though up to the last moment Musaddiq continued to maintain superficially very smiling personal relations with the British Chargé d'Affaires, his meetings with whom were, however, always staged in a blaze of publicity and, if photographs do not lie, amidst laughter and a great show of good humour, in October 1952 his Government broke off diplomatic relations with Great Britain. Mr. George Middleton and his staff left Tehran, the Swiss taking over custody of the Embassy's property. Musaddiq was surprised when this entailed the withdrawal of the British Council as well; he said he had not meant to rupture cultural relations and had not intended the loss of those good people who were busy teaching Iranians English. Like so many other matters, the break was invested with an air of unreality and an apparent failure on Musaddiq's part to realise the full implications of what he was doing; and yet the ultimate fact remained, that at last the Iranian nation's brooding sense of shame and an old antipathy for one of the Great Powers had written 'Finis' to a long chapter of history.

The break came at the time when Musaddiq should have been trying to answer the Truman-Churchill proposals on oil. In spite of it, Messrs. Alexander Gibb and Partners' engineers stayed on to continue the scheme for giving Tehran a mains water-supply and Dr. Musaddiq was furious when his more zealous henchman suggested that these Englishmen ought to go as well as all the others. In no circumstances would he hear of their leaving, with the result that a handful of British engineers remained in Tehran throughout the succeeding stormy months and supervised the work of pipe-laying in the streets of the capital. Demonstrators surged past them on more than one occasion but they were never molested.

It was remarkable the restraint with which, whatever the state of international relations, whatever the amount of newspaper abuse against foreigners, Iranians refrained from physically injuring individual foreign subjects. During the whole period only three Englishmen were killed. They were sailors from a ship at Abadan who had

[1] C. U. Aitcheson, *Treaties*, Calcutta, 1933, p. 83.

strayed into the midst of a riot in 1951 and the incident occurred before Musaddiq's representatives reached the oil producing area and actively encouraged the local population to treat foreigners as guests, entitled to all the customary Persian hospitality.

One of Musaddiq's numerous problems was what he considered the slowness and insufficiency of American aid. In April 1952, the United States announced the resumption of military aid, although it may be supposed that Musaddiq preferred the kind of aid he had hinted at to the United States Ambassador in January: aid for public health, education and agricultural development. For it seems certain that, in so far as any clear lines of constructive foreign policy did begin to become apparent during his premiership, the Doctor ultimately aimed at neutralism between East and West. Point IV aid, to the amount of 123 million dollars, was accepted; but military aid had temporarily been withdrawn because of Iran's failure to comply with the Mutual Security Act.

When military aid was resumed the Soviet Government protested, as usual, against it. Musaddiq was prompt to point out that it was for defence only and so not an infringement of the 1921 Treaty. Some forty persons illicitly crossing the Irano-Soviet border in Azerbaijan were arrested and several of them found to be Tudeh agents and Armenians. In this and similar incidents Musaddiq's attitude towards the U.S.S.R. was on the whole firm. He did finally concede the Russians' claim that 30th September 1952 was not the true date of expiry of the Russo-Iranian Caspian Fisheries Contract: it was agreed that the correct date was the end of January 1953, but this was a small admission.

By March 1953 the situation in Tehran had assumed a deeper tinge of gloom: the Iranian New Year of 1332, beginning on a date equivalent to 21st March, found life there still fraught with sudden alarms and plenty of danger. On 3rd March 1953 the Government had banned all demonstrations and troops and armoured cars patrolled the streets.

Whatever the nature of official Irano-Soviet relations may have been, as Dr. Musaddiq's career proceeded the communist authorities could hardly resist exploiting the situation. One American commentator has not failed to observe that much of the Tudeh Party's xenophobia was directed against the Americans,[1] so that Point IV officials came in for a considerable amount of rather contemptuous treatment, and the words, 'Yanks go home' appeared on walls in all the principal cities and towns. How far this was Iranian-inspired antipathy to increasing American influence, and how far Soviet

[1] Donald N. Wilbur, *Contemporary Iran*, London, 1963, p. 143.

agents were involved in it, is difficult to ascertain. Donald Wilber implies that Soviet direction played a considerable role; but xenophobia does not have to be imported into Iran.

In response to the rising influence of the Tudeh other parties emerged. In 1952 and 1953 the Tudeh nevertheless increased its influence very markedly. Its newspapers, *Mardum*, *Razm*, and *Zafar* ('The People', 'The struggle', 'Victory'), were clandestinely circulated and eagerly read by the younger intellectuals and by students. In language and the literary quality of some of their articles these journals had much to commend them. A theatre in Tehran which was Tudeh-dominated also provided a cultural oasis, notable enough for people who later became very chastened politically none the less to continue recalling its performances with respect as unequalled in Iran either before or since. The Tudeh supported womens' suffrage : its appeal was thus enhanced among the educated youth, attracting the rising generation of educated girls.

Among other parties which grew up was a small and violent faction called the Third Force. This was of a fascist character and, like another party, the Iran Party, was in strong opposition to the Tudeh. The Iran Party in the end emerged as the Prime Minister's chief support and demanded the abolition of both the Majlis and the Court, with complete control left in the hands of Dr. Musaddiq. It was middle class and mainly composed of frustrated professional men. It continued to exist after Musaddiq's fall, although in the post-Musaddiq era it had to go underground.

Musaddiq's attitude to all these parties, directly or indirectly acting in his support, was rather that of a man who hoped to benefit from their support but at the same time to ensure that they did not become too powerful. This was a very typical attitude, but its dangers became evermore apparent, and he had to be very careful to see that neither the parties nor the combination of the forces they had variously enlisted should in the end completely run him.

One of the most alarming aspects of Musaddiq's period was the release of the forces of violence and the scope for the non-constructive expression of pent-up frustrations which, to the detriment of all else, it permitted. A sudden sense of power was spread among people who had never had power and only a minority of whom were capable of exercising it rationally, so that the danger of unchecked hooliganism grew and the risk increased of the liberation of long-restrained instincts of cruelty.

Somehow, Musaddiq did manage for a long time to keep at bay the worst features which his regime promoted. It was not until near

the end that in the killing of Tehran's Chief of Police the very worst atrocity of the whole three years occurred, and then it was not committed by the Tudeh, by the Third Force, by the Fedayan-i-Islam or by the Iran Party, but by the royalists.

So great was the astonishment, the scorn and finally the horror felt by many outsiders at events in Iran between 1951 and 1954, and so frequently one-sided were foreign press reports (the *Manchester Guardian's* being often noteworthy exceptions), that other, less sensational aspects of life under Musaddiq have not received much notice. The majority of ordinary citizens continued to live their lives as always. Unless in politics, in office or in some other way in the public eye; and unless they happened to be caught in some Tehran (or, on occasion Isfahan or Shiraz) demonstration, ordinary people were not greatly affected by what was going on. Economic conditions had borne very severely on the majority of Iranians for a number of years; high, often prohibitive prices were not new. Throughout their long and chequered history Iranians have known extremely hard times; the typical Persian housewife and old female servants invariably save against shortages. Scraps of bread left over at meals are kept in sacks. The bread is unleavened, baked on stone or on metal sheets; once stored it can be made edible again, after long periods, by treatment in hot water, after a fashion known to the frugal. Stores of rice, fats and oil are laid in at certain seasons of the year in bulk, and the middle and poor classes are quite accustomed to going without meat, often, even if available, too expensive to buy. Preserving, pickling and the whole range of still-room practice, for ensuring supplies of commodities in off-seasons or in times of public disorder, have been brought to a fine art. Iranians know how to survive. This is partly why they show such resilience, the resilience so much talked of when, in spite of Dr. Musaddiq's apparently suicidal and certainly inept economic policies, life in Iran was nevertheless capable of continuing.

A nation whose basic needs were more complicated and whose basic mode of material existence less simple would have been more seriously dislocated, but as it happened the lives of thousands of people went on much as before. There were even some slight ameliorations. Minor civil servants, for instance, were less corrupt and on the testimony of Sayyid Ziau'd-Din, who for a time suffered imprisonment at the hands of Dr. Musaddiq and who in any case would have no reason to praise him, Musaddiq's Minister of Justice in his second Administration was 'the most just Minister of Justice Iran has ever had'.

On the testimony of an aristocrat who, although he happens to be

a relative of Musaddiq, did not hold with his policies, the local police were far less corrupt than he had ever known them to be. They would not take bribes, even those of a size that could have made a great difference to their comforts for a long time to come. These minor civil servants were influenced by the feeling that, whatever his demerits, their Prime Minister was the nation's minister in the fullest sense of the word. He was much loved by a very large number of the ordinary people – an unusual phenomenon where Iranian Prime Ministers are concerned. But then Musaddiq had driven out the British and this gave him the stature of a great hero in the eyes of a majority.

The fact remains that for long periods the police, the gendarmerie, the school-masters, all the lower ranks of the civil service were without pay, and yet they did not complain. They lived by a system of local, internal credit, confined to the quarters of the town they inhabited, and extended by the local shop-keepers on a neighbourly basis, operating in the knowledge that creditors and debtors were all in the same plight together and that some day accounts could be settled. The small shop-keeper continued to supply his neighbours until such times as they could pay, or so long as he had anything to supply. They were, after all, his only customers; to them he had no alternatives.

Strenuous efforts were made by officials of the National Iranian Oil Company to sell some of the oil stored in a refined and marketable condition at Abadan. In January 1953 the Aden Supreme Court granted the A.I.O.C.'s claims that an oil cargo in a ship named the 'Rose Marie' was the A.I.O.C.'s property; but the Company's claims on cargoes in an Italian and Japanese vessel respectively were rejected by lower courts in Venice and Tokyo. These incidents were connected with the visits of National Iranian Oil Company Directors to Japan and Italy, and efforts were also made to sell oil at half-price in the United States and Holland; but the A.I.O.C.'s blockade proved too strong for any effective sales operations to be possible.

In February Musaddiq rejected further Anglo-American proposals to end the deadlock and open discussions for the purchase of all oil in stock (by American Companies) and for compensation to be paid (based on one of the British nationalisation laws), with a view to eventual resumption of production and marketing by major international companies. His response was such that Mr. Eden concluded that nothing could be achieved by pursuing the matter.

Early in the year it was beginning to become evident to certain

members of the Majlis that Musaddiq might conceivably use his plenary powers to abolish their Assembly even as (with their help) he had earlier abolished the Senate. Fifteen Deputies tabled a motion on 4th January designed to prevent this. But Musaddiq broadcast an assurance to the nation two days later that he would not dissolve the National Assembly. He thereupon received a unanimous vote of confidence, with only one abstention; it seems that nobody wanted him to stay and nobody wanted him to go.

While for the nonce the threatened rift between the Prime Minister and the Majlis was everted, the rift between him and the Shah was widening. One of the major issues between the Shah and the Prime Minister bore directly on the financial situation. Mussadiq wanted to tax royal property, exempt from normal taxation because the revenues from it had some six years before been allocated to the royal charitable organisation.

The tussle lasted until on 23rd February it was announced that there had been a meeting of Deputies with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Court, and following this the Shah had agreed to most of Dr. Musaddiq's demands. In the Senate on 6th October 1952, His Majesty had declared his support of Dr. Musaddiq's oil nationalisation policy, but subsequent events were to show that this support was to avail the Shah very little and by the winter of 1952 the Shah was beginning to look prematurely aged with worry; and worse was yet to come.

On 11th May 1953, the Shah transferred estates inherited from his father to the Government for a payment of sixty million rials annually to the Pahlavi Charitable Organisation. Musaddiq was showing an increasing eagerness to bolster Iran's dwindling financial reserves with treasure from the King, and it is alleged that he complained at his subsequent trial that the Shah had refused to disgorge his dollar assets in the United States.

Certainly in 1953 Muhammad Musaddiq desperately needed all he could get for the Treasury. He devoted a great deal of his own wealth – some say all of it – to the country and it seems that he wanted the Shah to do the same. One wonders what he did about the other members of his own class of landed magnates; the Shah was probably an easier proposition, a weaker prey.

By the end of February rumours were becoming persistent that the Shah was going to leave the country and it was spread about that he had spurned an appeal made by Kashani that he should stay. This seems to have been a fabrication intended to cast a slur on the Shah's patriotism and sense of duty. It was beginning to look as if Musaddiq were thinking in terms of getting rid of him

altogether; he was now pressing for extended and if possible even fuller powers, though he still lacked control of the Army.

Musaddiq told the Majlis that the Shah's proposed journey abroad was a routine matter. It might have been supposed, for one thing, that His Majesty wished to see his mother and sisters. The Queen Mother and the Shah's twin sister, Princess Ashraf, had been in Europe for some time. As early as December 1951 Musaddiq had demanded the Queen Mother's expulsion from Iran. In October 1952 he had demanded the removal of H.I.H. Princess Ashraf's Egyptian husband, Ahmad Shafiq, from his post as Director of Civil Aviation. From this date onwards the Queen Mother, Princess Ashraf and a number of their friends, among them some well-known and wealthy entrepreneurs, had been living in exile.

In February 1953 Musaddiq also told the Majlis that unless it gave him a decision within forty-eight hours on the future of his powers, he would hold a referendum to decide the question of its dissolution. At this stage his aims were clear: to have himself voted permanent Prime Minister and to control the Army.

Just over a month later Musaddiq's frustration, because the fullest possible powers had not yet been granted him, drove him to the microphone to deliver an attack on the Imperial Court. He accused it of interfering in affairs and of plotting with the Opposition and the Press against him. His frustration was bound to be mounting: he believed that he alone must lead the nation and that it was his destiny (long enough deferred) to do so. Things were getting out of hand. He was, he felt, surrounded by enemies. For a long time now he had lived mostly in the Majlis building, because the Majlis was *bast*, sanctuary, and residing there he did not risk assassination on his way to and from Parliament. Like many others, he suspected that there were those near the Shah who could encompass his assassination. He might have recollected that, though the assassins of Hasan-i-Sabah, the 'Old Man of the Mountains', in the eleventh century, were ostensibly hostile to the reigning powers, members of those powers were not above conspiring with them to have a murder arranged; and he might have considered that the Fidayan-i-Islam in the twentieth century was capable of being employed with a similar ambiguity.

He had seen the New Year pass with no decision made on the future shaping of the political machine. It is customary in Iran for No Ruz, the New Year's Day on 21st–22nd March, to bring some announcement of Government policy and, if changes there are to be, of changes. Already the Tudeh had started to call for a united front against the Court and on 14th April had attempted to stage an

anti-Shah demonstration in the square outside the Majlis. This looked as if they were gaining the initiative; but in order to forestall the Tudeh, Musaddiq needed control of the Army, which he had still not succeeded in getting.

He had great difficulty, especially as time went on, in attracting to his service high-ranking officials of the more honourable and respectable kind. Several such men who possessed private means retired altogether from public life. A most honourable Iranian diplomat went to live in Shiraz, where he wrote a novel. Another civil official of impeccable probity retired to the shrine-city of Qum. Him Musaddiq begged to come out of retirement and take up the duties of Governor of Isfahan. He sent him a pair of exquisite Isfahan rugs with a note saying, 'I want to send you as Governor General to the city where these were made'. But this pathetic appeal elicited only a negative answer. Such men would not serve in the same ranks as Musaddiq's Foreign Minister, Husain Fatemi, a former journalist whom Qavam had once sent packing, preferring his absence in Europe (at Government expense) to his presence in Tehran. They would not serve with some of the other rather dubious characters who at one time or another had been the Prime Minister's chief henchmen. Thus Musaddiq had to employ what men he could, and was even in the end deserted by some of the bad characters he had once had round him. He had, however, some officers on his side, including one whom he had made Chief of Police, Brigadier Afshar Tus. This officer had acquired a somewhat sanguinary reputation while engaged in suppressing tribes for Reza Shah. He was not a well-liked man and was given to a kind of self-indulgence that was not easy to procure; a fact which led to his death in one of the most dreadful events of the Musaddiq period and in modern Persian history.

Musaddiq's broadcast attack on the Court had been rebutted by Mr. 'Ala, the Minister of Court, but it seems that other more hot-headed members of the Shah's entourage decided the time had come for some signal act of definance against Musaddiq's regime. A little later, in the same month of April 1953, the Chief of Police disappeared. On 14th April it was reported that his mutilated body had been found. He had, it seems, arranged an assignation with someone and one night left his car and chauffeur in a side street and gone alone to the rendezvous, where he was seized and taken to a lonely spot outside Tehran. There he suffered terrible retribution for his own former cruelties : it would appear that he was slowly tortured to death. The newspapers in Baghdad headed the news of his kidnapping and murder with a description of Tehran as a city of death,

and the episode had a terrible effect on the prestige of Musaddiq's Government everywhere.

By May Musaddiq had increased his hold on the Court by getting the faithful and skilful Mr. 'Ala replaced as Minister of Court by someone more amenable. But several of his own leading supporters were beginning to waver, notably Mulla Kashani. When a bill to limit the Shah's powers reached the voting stage in the Majlis on 7th June, the sitting broke up in an uproar and Kashani, the President, accused Muhammad Musaddiq of acting unconstitutionally. Kashani was soon replaced by Dr. Mu'azzami, a University Professor who was more loyal to Musaddiq. Gone were the days when Kashani's influence over the populace and his xenophobic bitterness had been useful to the Prime Minister.

Another very potent factor in the gradual disintegration of pro-Musaddiq forces was his failure to prove himself the man who could obtain money: in July it became known that President Eisenhower had not responded to an appeal from Musaddiq for 'prompt and effective' help. Fifty members of the Persian Parliament resigned in the middle of the month because they said they could not work with the Opposition. In taking this extraordinary step they were doing what Musaddiq wanted in order to bring about the Majlis's destruction. It appears that they had first sought the Shah's advice and gained the impression that he agreed with their proposed action; but on the contrary he never seems to have quite forgiven them for it.

Finally, Musaddiq tried to have the referendum held which he had threatened to arrange to achieve the Majlis's dissolution; but on this occasion he again felt the weight of Kashani's opposition and was unable to put his plans into effect. On 13th August the Shah issued a decree appointing General Zahedi Prime Minister in place of Musaddiq, but the latter refused to take any notice of the Shah's *firman* and as a result on 16th August General Zahedi was involved in an attempt by the Imperial Guard to have Musaddiq arrested. The attempt failed and General Zahedi was forced to go into hiding, while the Shah, accompanied by his Queen and one pilot-officer only, flew in a private plane from his summer residence near the Caspian Sea and reached Baghdad, whence he and Queen Soraya shortly after went on to Rome.

Musaddiq declared the National Assembly dissolved and it seemed as if mob-rule were about to have the field entirely to itself. A large crowd of demonstrators in Tehran came out in favour of Musaddiq to a man – even, in jest, to a donkey, for a donkey that strayed into the surging crowds was pointed at as yet another

Musaddiq supporter. It appears that at this stage in the proceedings, on 17th August, the Tudeh Party was under careful instructions, efficiently passed to its members with great rapidity and succinctness and possibly emanating from the Russian Embassy, to participate in the crowd's acclamation of Dr. Musaddiq. And yet by 19th August the tide had turned completely the other way.[1]

The Shah's dismantled statues still lay beside their plinths, in the main squares and streets of Tehran and of other cities, when suddenly the Army appeared; not, as a day or two before, in the shape of groups of nervous and uncertain soldiers who had in the end either gone with the mob or made themselves scarce, but as a well-disciplined force, under firm command. After about nine hours of street fighting, it gained control of one of the main east-west arteries of the city of Tehran and was close to Muhammad Musaddiq's private house, where he had taken refuge.

On the 19th and 20th August the Tudeh Party's instructions were, surprisingly enough, the reverse of what they had been on the day, so shortly before, of Musaddiq's great acclaim : party members were to remain indoors and have no part in what was happening. The Army reached the Prime Minister's house relatively unopposed and Musaddiq was seized, his mansion gutted and destroyed. By 22nd August, the Shah was back.

An eye-witness has said that Musaddiq was in bed during those last hours when his house was about to be stormed. When he heard the rifle fire and the rumble of tanks approaching, he pulled a sheet over his head and snuggled down giggling and saying 'Look what I've done!' (*bebin che kar kardam*). This story is probably apocryphal, but this episode in Iran's history does show what one man can do.

[1] David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, *The Invisible Government*, London, 1965, pp. 110–114, gives another account of Musaddiq's fall, tallying with popular rumours implicating U.S. agents.

Chapter 27

The Shah's Rule

On his return journey from Rome, the Shah again halted at Baghdad. This time he presented a very different figure from the sad and weary man who only a few days before had landed there. Then the Iranian Ambassador had not gone to greet the Shah. Neither had the Ambassador in Rome. Both paid dearly for their mistaken belief that the Shah's cause was lost; but at the time it had seemed so to many, besides his two envoys.

From Baghdad His Majesty repeated the gesture made on his outward journey. He performed the visitations of the devout to the Shi'i Holy Places in Iraq. He was photographed with his fingers on the grill round the sarcophagus of 'Ali, the most sanctified figure among the saints of the Shi'a; and the picture was to be used extensively in the following years as propaganda for the Shah, along with posters depicting him and the *Quran*, their caption linking 'God, Shah and Country'; a concept of post Reformation Christian Europe, but not of Islam.

The treasury was practically empty: one of General Zahedi's first acts was to appeal to President Eisenhower. He hinted at Iranian readiness to come to an agreement in the oil dispute. A week later the United States Government announced an addition to the over twenty million dollars already granted under Point IV; there was to be a further grant of forty-seven million dollars.

General Zahedi's first proclamations followed the by now usual style of new Prime Ministers' programmes. Reforms were promised and reference was made to the opening of two hundred rural dispensaries and more expenditure on schools. At the same time, however, school children and students, in Tehran and other large cities, were receiving some rough handling. Secondary school boys and girls, as well as students of Tehran University, had been conspicuous in the recent riots and demonstrations, and so Iran was already acquainted with student outbursts reminiscent of those in Egypt.

On the medical front Point IV was helping to combat malaria,

while, since 1949, some German doctors had been employed under the aegis of the Imperial Charitable Organisation. Hospitals in a few rural areas, especially in the north and in Khuzistan, and in more backward cities such as Shushtar, had been established. Since the war Princess Ashraf, a woman of astute intelligence and great energy, had been active in promoting nurses' training. Britain was taken as the model for this training, and assistance given by one or two English salaried and voluntary workers. With the help of a Miss Palmer-Smith, who had lived many years in Tehran, a number of girls had been sent to British training hospitals. An English matron ran the training school named after Her Imperial Highness Princess Ashraf in Tehran, and the city already boasted a modern hospital of a thousand beds.

These schemes for improved health services tackled a problem of dimensions too immense for spectacular results to be expected after only a short time. Also the schemes did not gain much publicity; the main topics in the press had been the turpitude of Great Britain, of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, of the Imperial Family, or the 'interference' and ineptness of United States advisers. The main purpose to which publicity organs had been put had been political, of a nationalist and reactionary kind. It had been the purpose of Dr. Musaddiq's party to decry anything good achieved through foreign help and encouragement, or by the royal establishment. It had been the purpose of the old élite to oppose the amelioration of conditions among the masses of the people, and to block anything threatening their own order with the extinction which change and improved social conditions might bring about. It had also been consonant with the reactionary clerics' outlook to obstruct tooth and nail any increase in social awareness or any modern improvements, in hygiene, education and development of the nation's wealth. For political purposes the Tudeh Party had veered to the side of the nationalists, fanatics and conservatives. The Tudeh wanted to deprive the royal family and its Western supporters of the kudos of reform and improvements in the lot of the people. To this extent, at least, were the Party's members misled by anti-Western sources to put political considerations above those of the general good. Their error was terrible: Iranians will forgive much if they can find evidence of disinterested sincerity and charitable intent. The Tudeh's failure to evince either doomed their cause so far as the majority of the people was concerned. The Tudeh's role during the Musaddiq era was the more contemptible because its actions were ultimately attributable to stupidity and lack of patriotism: blindly accepting the principle that no good at all could come out of the West and

its friends, it failed to recognise virtue and good intent where these were manifest, or to support the efforts of the Point IV officials. Indulging in the political chimeras created by the Cold War tactics of Soviet Russia, the Tudeh Party based itself on a foolish, uncritical obedience of policies dictated from somewhere else and in someone else's interest.

Young men of liberal sympathies, people genuinely anxious to discover a way of curing Iran's ills, were many of them attracted towards the Tudeh Party. On the other hand, several slightly older men, with a similar liberal concern, left wartime political groupings as soon as they were threatened with Tudeh infiltration. Men like Dr. Hasan Arsanjani, shortly to become a well-known Minister of Agriculture, and Mustafa Fateh, the economist, politician and senior Iranian in the A.I.O.C. before nationalisation, for example, were not so foolish as to be deceived. On the other hand, sympathy for the misled makes it hard to condemn out of hand those whom the Tudeh Party attracted. It is perhaps here that allusion would again be appropriate to the strictures in George Lenscowski's *Russia and the West in Iran*, on the lack of ideological guidance offered the intellectuals of Iran by the West during and immediately after the war. It cannot be denied that the West failed to offer young Iranians any alternative to the subtle and pernicious guidance emanating from Russia; perhaps the Americans set too much store by material aid, while Great Britain desired the minimum possible commitment.

Lack of publicity for good works between 1941 and 1953 was part of what can now be seen to have constituted a general failure of communication. Contact between the Shah and his people, and between the West and the ordinary people of Iran, was seriously lacking. It could be argued that the abandonment of Muhammad 'Ali Furughi's initial efforts in 1941, to introduce the Shah to the nation in a good light, was due to the Allies' policy of keeping the Shah in the background during the War; a policy encouraged by those older statesmen to whom, in the main, western officials turned. The Shah comments warmly, and with good cause, on the Prime Minister who, through age and illness, he unfortunately lost so soon after Reza Shah's abdication: he describes Muhammad 'Ali Furughi as 'my able and scholarly . . . Prime Minister'.[1]

Nevertheless, although the German doctors appointed to hospitals sponsored by the Imperial Foundation complained of hospitals with good buildings but no beds, or of bad buildings with good beds

[1] H.I.M. Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, *Mission for My Country*, London, 1961, p. 75.

but no stores, by 1953 the effects of improved hygiene and of the anti-malaria campaign were beginning to show. Infant mortality was appreciably declining. Thus by 1956 the sociologist and demographer, Dr. Ehsan Naraghi, could publish startling figures demonstrating how rapidly Iran was heading for the day when the non-adult population would outnumber adults. The need for greatly improved and very wisely directed education has therefore become urgent and, according to Dr. T. Cuyler Young in an article, *Iran in Continuing Crisis*,[1] the promotion of public health, etc., has 'contributed to an estimated population increase of 2·5 per cent a year, so that half the population is now (1961–62) under 18 years of age'.

Another concern, since freedom of movement was restored in 1941 on the removal of Reza Shah's restrictions, has been the flight to the cities from the countryside. Already the disturbing potentiality of the mob, revealed during Musaddiq's time, had emphasised the dangers inherent both in the sudden upsurge of an infantile and adolescent majority and in the crowding of more people into cities. The city most affected was Tehran. There the population rose from 500,000 to a million in less than two decades, and from a million to nearly two million in under another ten years. Thus the tumults of 1952 and 1953 may be in part attributed to the pressures of over-population in the capital and the concomitant economic difficulties; pressures which continue to increase. In this chapter it will be one of our purposes to see how the Shah has been endeavouring to meet this problem. In order to check the expansion of the capital, the provincial cities have to be revitalised; but this can only be done when the Shah feels his central Government secure enough for him to risk giving greater autonomy to other centres. Implicit in these issues are: first, the need for improved communications, second, rural development and third, more contact between the ruler and those masses who are remote from Tehran and therefore less accessible to agitators opposed to the monarchy. In the rural masses, as, in view of his land reform policy, he has probably realised, there could be a reservoir of support for the Shah.

One of the Shah's first public acts after Musaddiq's fall was to re-inaugurate the gradual distribution of Crown Lands. On 25th October 1953 he gave title deeds to about sixteen hundred peasants. Each was granted $3\frac{1}{2}$ hectares, for which payment was to be made in easy instalments over a period of twenty-five years. Henceforth pictures of His Majesty, looking rather like somebody at a school prize-giving, handing out beribboned scrolls to lean and sunburned

[1] *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, January 1962, p. 278.

men in dark suits, round felt caps and no tie, were a familiar item in pro-Shah publicity.

In connection with these ceremonies a certain inconsistency or ambivalence on the part of the Shah can be observed in his attitude to traditional Iranian ways of making obeisance. For it is said that he does not like the traditional gestures made on such occasions by peasants who try and prostrate themselves in front of him, kissing first his hands, then his knees and finally his feet; or of villagers who, on his arrival, slaughter sheep in his path in accordance with ancient custom – it is reported that he has expressly forbidden this. (Economic reasons do not enter into arguments for or against this rite because the meat of the slaughtered animal in any case is distributed afterwards to feed the hungry.) Yet on the other hand there was once a rumour that His Imperial Majesty was annoyed because one official in an Iranian Embassy in Europe criticised another for rather ostentatiously falling flat on his face in front of his Shah, on the tarmac of the airport which serves a great European capital. In this instance the Shah appears to have taken condemnation of such obeisance by someone other than himself as an affront; which may indicate that it is difficult always to be sure of the variable tastes of Princes; or that an excuse was in any event being sought to rebuke the carping official.

One of the most delicate problems facing the Shah and his new Prime Minister in the autumn of 1953 was the question of relations with England. Musaddiq having gone and the necessity of oil talks being resumed having become pressing, 'they', the British, would once more have to be encountered. In some guise they would once more have to be re-admitted; it seemed inevitable that they should now return to the Iranian scene. No delusions ought for one moment to be entertained about how serious and delicate a dilemma the Shah and his Minister felt themselves faced with over this.

A very slight overture occurred in that fateful autumn when the veteran traveller, journalist and politician, the Labour M.P. Morgan Philips Price, arrived in Baghdad and asked at the Iranian Consulate-General for a visa to visit Tehran. It seemed unlikely that he would get one; but the Consul-General was the Shah's man so that perhaps he knew the Shah's wishes. The visa was granted and Mr. Philips Price on the bus to Tehran in no time. Shortly afterwards he was back in Baghdad with a fascinating story to tell, of his meeting with the Shah and other prominent men. The Shah had said he wanted to be friendly with England, but had then stepped up to the huge map on his study walls and, running his finger along the long frontier with the U.S.S.R., added that he

had also to be friendly with 'them'. Had Mr. Philips Price ever, the Shah enquired, been to Iran before? The answer was yes, he had, and the English traveller described how in 1912 he entered Iran from Turkey on horse-back and had been entertained just within the northwestern border by the Khan of Maku. The Shah replied pensively that his father had been compelled to get rid of the Khan of Maku; and then they had both smiled at this recollection of the past.

Mr. Philips Price had seen Kashani as well. They had talked of the similarities between the Unitarian and Muslim religious positions and then oil was mentioned. Kashani had said the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company must forego compensation and Mr. Philips Price had started to reach for his hat. The visit was not, of course, official; nor was it of very great significance. Kashani, did he but know it, was finished : like Macarthy in America, he had been kept afloat, not only by his oratory, but by the press and the public attention it focused upon him. The Shah and General Zahedi quickly killed his influence by shrewdly turning off the spot-lights on him. But Mr Philips Price's conversation with the Shah was of more significance : at least the Shah had consented to see a British Member of Parliament, upon whom he had created a moderately favourable impression – though, as Mr Philips Price said, it was extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, really to fathom, from what he said, what he thought.

Britain made resumption of diplomatic relations a condition for reopening oil negotiations. Later a request was lodged with the Iranian Government demanding a more friendly attitude to the Church of England Missionary Society, this to be an earnest of goodwill. In June 1953 the Anglican Bishop of Isfahan had been given only a few days' notice by Musaddiq's Government to leave the country, while the Reverend Norman Sharp, the pastor at Shiraz and accused of spying among the tribes, had been ordered to leave in July. In October 1954 he was permitted to resume his pastorate.

The British allowed twenty-five locomotives on order for Iran to be despatched, payment for them to be left to Iran's convenience. Mr. Eden sent General Zahedi friendly messages and spoke in the House of Commons in a conciliatory manner about Persia. The Shah asked Zahedi to summon a special meeting, a Council of Elders, in the big saloon of the Foreign Ministry. He was to put to them the question of resuming relations. There was silence until somebody urged a well-known Majlis orator, notorious for his independent spirit but also for his pro-British sympathies, to speak. His name was Jamal Emami and the man sitting next to him said,

'Lion of Iran, arise!'. Mr. Imami rose to his feet and began speaking – the deadlock was broken, General Zahedi being given freedom to go ahead. On 5th December, the Iranian Government intimated willingness to resume relations. The Foreign Minister desired that diplomats should be sent who had never before been in Iran. Eventually one exception was allowed and, accompanied by one diplomat who had previous Iranian experience, Mr. [now Sir] D. A. H. Wright arrived in Tehran on 23rd December 1953 as Chargé d'Affaires. (In 1963 he returned to Iran as British Ambassador.)

Meanwhile on 21st December, Dr. Musaddiq had been tried by a Military Court together with his Chief of Staff, General Riahi. Musaddiq had pleaded that neutralism and an economy based on resources excluding oil were in Iran's best interests; and so there it was, the truth at last – the Doctor had somehow wanted all along, had all along dreamed, pathetically perhaps, of an Iran that should be free of the trammels of oil and of big power rivalries. He was sentenced to three years' solitary confinement on charges which were in effect that he had defied the Constitution as it touched the Shah's prerogatives.

In spite of all that had been happening, the Kuhrang Tunnel, by which a portion of the head-waters of the River Karun were diverted to irrigate the valley of the Zayandeh Rud, in which Isfahan stands, was completed. Messrs Alexander Gibb and Partners of London were the consultant engineers for this project, by which a scheme conceived three centuries before by the Safavid Shah 'Abbas I had at last been realised. Shah 'Abbas I had attempted to cut a cleft through the rock barrier, beyond which the River Karun begins its southward meander, to bring some of its water over the watershed.[1] This the tunnel now achieved. Muhammad Reza Shah flew to the lonely spot where the tunnel had been constructed and on 16th October officially opened it. But it soon became clear that the distribution of the new water supply was to be a source of friction among local landowners. Those who considered that they were not receiving a handsome enough share began the usual criticisms, of the scheme's limitations and imperfections; of the folly of tampering with nature and so on. Thus a great achievement, which in most other countries would have been proudly hailed as such, in Iran became the subject of wrangling, local intrigues and absurd allegations; some even went so far as to suggest that it was a British 'plot'.

Throughout 1954 the Shah and his Prime Minister had to move

[1] His attempt had been preceded by Shah Tahmasp I's effort to make a tunnel and was succeeded by a further attempt under Shah 'Abbas II, the latter aided by a French engineer.

with caution, although a new Majlis, opened on 18th March 1954, gave General Zahedi a vote of confidence and proved itself in a fairly gentle mood. The dangers lay outside the Chamber and were to no small degree communist-inspired.

In spite of Dr. Musaddiq's antipathy towards communism, his increasing inability to shake off, indeed, to do without Tudeh support left it at the time of his fall in a state of considerable animation. During 1953 Russia had started more actively to woo the Musaddiq regime: it had been on the cards that an 'Iranian People's Democracy' might easily be created; or so optimistic Soviet experts and, more particularly, some of the Persian communists seem to have imagined. It is impossible to say how far these ideas were shared by the supreme Soviet authorities; there must have been Soviet experts more expert still in Iranian matters and aware that easy solutions are unusual in a Persian context. According to evidence produced in the *Black Book on the Tudeh Officers' Organisation*, published in 1956 by the Iranian Government, it was planned that Dr. Musaddiq should in the first instance be made President of the new Republic, quickly to be followed by the Tudeh Party's Secretary General, Dr. Radmanesh.[1]

On 5th August 1953, President Eisenhower had felt constrained to criticise Dr. Musaddiq's collaboration with the communists. Three days later Mr. Malenkov had made friendly references to Iran and spoken of increasing Irano-Soviet accord. Musaddiq's Foreign Minister, Husain Fatemi, was believed to be more accessible to communist influence than his master; and it is said that it was he who did most to encourage the unhappy Prime Minister to defy the Shah's decree of dismissal.

When, by 19th August, victory seemed surely to be within the Tudeh's grasp, as we have suggested directions from Russian sources appear suddenly to have changed : on the day of Musaddiq's arrest the Tudeh demonstrators stayed at home. Soviet reactions to Musaddiq's defeat were 'brief, unintelligible'.[2] But the Soviet Government had no doubt been wiser than some of its creatures : caution in August 1953 meant that, as Professor Dallin pertinently comments, it was 'possible for Moscow to continue relations with Iran', after Musaddiq's fall.

When in January 1954 fifty Tudeh Party members were arrested, and later, after reports of a plot to assassinate the Shah, death sentences were imposed (several were later commuted to life

[1] *Black Book*, p. 275. Cf. David J. Dallin, *Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin*, London, 1962, p. 210.

[2] David J. Dallin, op. cit., p. 214.

imprisonment), the Soviet Government did not lift a finger, though it did protest against the hostility of the Persian Press.

This protest was symptomatic : it took up the theme that adverse criticism of the Soviet Government in the Persian Press was damaging to 'Soviet-Iranian good neighbourly relations', and would work for the benefit of third powers. The point to be taken is that, allusions to the United States aside, the U.S.S.R. was moving towards restoration of 'normal' relations. Although it was some time before this renewal of cordiality could be completed, nevertheless in December 1954 an agreement was signed which provided for payment of Russian war debts to Iran, amounting to eleven tons of gold and over eight million dollars. The Agreement also provided for the re-mapping of disputed sectors of the frontier.

Russia – as in the case of Azerbaijan in 1947 – wasted no time or tears over disappointed native communists. As a matter of course she protested against the possibility of Iran's joining a Turkey-Pakistan axis, and she went so far as to try a ruse intended to destroy the Iranian ruler's confidence in the United States. But the suggestion that the United States was plotting to give Turkey a piece of Azerbaijan, and Pakistan, some of Baluchistan, in return for their forming a Pakistan-Turkey Pact, was too palpably a fabrication to deceive anyone. Nonetheless it showed that the Russians had a nice sense of history : on what score could the Shah be more sensitive than a threat to his distant perimeter areas? At the same time, however, besides the thaw marked by the agreement for payment of Russian war debts, on 17th June a new trade agreement was signed; once again evidence that the economic link had to be considered although relations might otherwise be strained.

The anti-Tudeh drive of 1954 turned attention to the existence of communist agents in the armed forces. The opportunity was also taken to reveal a Tudeh net-work in Abadan, with possible repercussions on the oil industry in Kuwait. Because American aid and Western goodwill in general were needed, there was naturally no incentive for the Iranian Government to minimise the extent of the communist menace and no trouble was spared to publicise it.

These measures against the Tudeh aftermath of the days when Musaddiq was in power spelt in a more tangible form than anything else the end of the freedom which dated back to 1941. After 1954 it was no longer possible for writers and artists to meet in cafés opening off one of Tehran's most thronged streets, as throughout the War and for nearly a decade after it they had been in the habit of doing. Until 1951 Sadiq Hedayat had been of their number and was generally to be seen, at about six o'clock in the evening, chatting

with friends in a teashop or one of the bars in the centre of the city. When his brother-in-law, Razm-Ara, was murdered, Hedayat decided to leave the country; he wrote to the author saying that the 'vileness' and political 'obscenity' of Tehran had become intolerable. There was, he said, no hope any longer that political freedom or decency might prevail, and he was leaving never to return. In fact some months later news of his suicide in Paris was heard; Iran had lost a great writer and a man of deep insight.

Hedayat's belief that, once assassination and violence gained the upper hand, the end of genuine freedom for the majority of Iranian individuals and their ordinary avocations was in sight, was certainly accurate, for Musaddiq's experiment was followed in its defeat by the regime of a police state. This was inevitable in a counter-revolutionary movement determined to prevent a recurrence of the situation between 1951 and 1953. The blame, therefore, for the repression which began in 1953 rests in no small measure with Musaddiq himself, and with those who took advantage of the situation he created. Also culpable in a final analysis were all those Iranian politicians who from 1941 onwards proved themselves incapable of using parliamentary freedom properly when they had it; perhaps the greatest blame must be laid at the door of the Majlis – although there is not much to be said for attempting precisely to apportion a blame in which so many different factors and personalities, including foreign powers, ultimately share.

The year 1954 also brought into the open the self-seeking of those who had remained faithful to the House of Pahlavi throughout the preceding period, and who now sought revenge and a renewal of profitable activity. Under Musaddiq's government they had suffered obloquy, imprisonment and exile; and for the exiles who gathered around Princess Ashraf and other members of the royal family in Europe, the restrictions on currency during Dr. Musaddiq's time, and uncertainty about the future, had made life far from easy. Prominent among those who had been driven from positions of influence after 1951 were members of the new entrepreneur class, who returned in 1953 in a mood of jubilant hopefulness and eager to compete with those who had supported the Musaddiq regime and so were now at a great disadvantage. In these circumstances General Zahedi as Prime Minister could, if he wished, breakfast in a dozen different mansions, whose owners were eager to establish their value to his Government, and make known their deserts for past loyalty to the Shah. His own courtyards were at the same time filled with a crowd not all of whose components were of the most honest, and the majority of whom had unmistakable looks of expectation in their

eyes. Opportunists were everywhere and the Shah might well have been just as disgusted by some of his friends as he was embittered against his enemies.

In particular two groups were beginning to emerge. The aims of the first were more purely political than those of the second, whose aims were primarily in the sphere of business – although ultimately they too intended to make business and the wealth it brought serve political ends. The second group comprised the entrepreneurs who had been faithful to the Shah; the first will be described in a moment.

The West, like the Shah, considered the reactivation of development programmes essential. In order to effect this, the United States voted additional aid to provide funds until oil revenues could again begin. In November 1954, for instance, it was announced in Washington that the United States could spare Iran 127,000,000 dollars and the Seven Year Plan recommenced operations under the direction of Mr. Abu'l-Hasan Ebtehaj, a man of great energy and a former General Manager of the National Bank.

Once development began again, there was scope both for contractors and for those who could arrange to import constructional machinery. Iran lacked both agricultural and constructional plant and this deficiency had been recognised when a Trade Agreement was concluded with Russia on 17th June and provided for the purchase of agricultural implements, tractors, vehicles and industrial machinery. The entrepreneur class, however, generally speaking, looked to the West: the principal contracts were with Europe and America; with Britain and increasingly with West Germany. If influential entrepreneurs could channel plant imports exclusively through themselves, they would be in an extremely strong position. Not only would they get richer, but political power would also lie within their grasp.

There thus began an almost classically Persian regrouping of power interests – and the existence of the national Plan Organisation, especially under the direction of the ferociously honest Mr. Ebtehaj, was a stumbling block to the particular interest whose fortunes we must now follow a little longer. One of the purposes of the Plan Organisation was to provide for the purchase of development requirements in the fairest and most economical markets, on behalf of the Iranian Government and subject to the vigilance of the lending authorities, the United States Foreign Operations Administration and the Export-Import Bank, for example, as well as the World Bank. There was thus a conflict here between private enterprise and state endeavour. The struggle between the Plan Organisation, more especially between Mr. Ebtehaj himself and the

entrepreneur clique, rapidly gained an intensity such that between 1955 and 1960 it seriously impeded the accomplishment of development plans.

The entrepreneurs were active in the Majlis, in the Ministries, with the press, at Court and in the Plan Organisation itself. Unless they were given a fair share of the spoils, they could, and in one notable instance very nearly did, completely wreck Plan Organisation projects. With that same disregard for logical political allegiances which had increased the confusion of the days of Musaddiq, and profiting from the national tendency to keep allegiances and an eye to the main chance separate, the new capitalists would, when necessary, go so far as to enlist the support of anti-government forces against the Government's Planning Authority. If they did not feel they were being given a fair deal in a major constructional undertaking, they were capable of suborning and duping underground Iran Party sympathisers and pro-Musaddiq elements in the Ministries, and in the Plan Organisation, into hindering the progress of public works. Thus strange meetings and unusual reconciliations took place, between old Musaddiq-men and businessmen notorious for their pro-western, pro-British, anti-Musaddiq, anti-Iran Party affiliations.

This group had also to keep a constant watch on the Shah: Zahedi, during his tenure of office from August 1953 to 6th April 1955, seems to have proved reasonably amenable – at least the entrepreneur clique seem to have had no difficulty in getting helpful Ministers into certain key posts. The Shah, however, was different: he had to scan very broad horizons. His appointment of Abu'l Hasan Ebtehaj, for example, may be explained on the grounds that, while Ebtehaj had stood against Muhammad Musaddiq, Ebtehaj also has wide influence with foreigners: he was a man who inspired a remarkable degree of confidence in potential international lenders of money. This was a crucial qualification for office as head of the Plan Organisation at a time when it was estimated that oil revenues would not reach the expected plenitude for at least three years.

The Shah also had to observe the patterns, of events and personalities, nearer home. If Ebtehaj were unpopular with a potentially powerful group in Iran, and unsusceptible to pressure – he began his term of office with the announcement that he would 'cleanse the Plan Organisation of the nepotism, inefficiency and corruption' with which he found it 'riddled' – this was all to the good. The Shah would not again, if he could help it, allow a variety of forces to join together and unseat him. A major part of his actions of the last ten years is to be explained in terms of *divide et impera.*

Hence Mr. Ebtehaj's appointment. Nevertheless, at first the entrepreneurs certainly had hopes of melting some of Mr. Ebtehaj's scruples – while in any event they knew their way about the Court, so that even an Ebtehaj might be made malleable. In fact he never was, which is perhaps one of the so far unexplained reasons why later he was suddenly disgraced.

The first group, whose leaders' aims were more purely political, had also to keep the Shah constantly in view. This group chiefly comprised older politicians, several of whom had reached ministerial status in previous administrations or had at least been in a position to hope for it in a short time. Dr. Musaddiq had dashed their hopes and plunged them into a political wilderness. In 1954 they re-emerged to recoup their shattered fortunes. Excluded from this group were the few older leading statesmen whose ambitions may be regarded as fulfilled, or whose caution must be considered extreme. Mr. 'Ala, for example, kept aloof. Although he ultimately lost his post as Minister of Court under Musaddiq, Mr. 'Ala's fortunes could not be considered to have been shattered during the Musaddiq period. In this faithful servant to the Shah, his modest demeanour, extraordinary sincerity and political skill had been safeguards against injury throughout that extremely difficult period. Mr. 'Ala was an old man, untroubled by vaulting ambition. Then there was also Mr. Taqizadeh. Mr. Taqizadeh could not be said to have any fortunes to be shattered, and he, like Mr. 'Ala, was no impetuous youngster, but a man eminent for great caution. During Musaddiq's regime he had once felt constrained to go to Parliament and defend his reputation; it had been alleged that he was the instrument for Iran's submission to the dictates of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1933. Taqizadeh, in one of the most moving speeches ever heard in the Persian Parliament, had reminded his listeners that under Reza Shah all politicians were but instruments in the hands of a dictator. Taqizadeh had remained comparatively safe during Musaddiq's time and, if his ambitions had remained unfulfilled, that was probably because the remoteness of their nature rendered them incapable of fulfilment in his lifetime. Both these men are mentioned in connection with the first of the two groups under discussion because in fact it was towards Mr. 'Ala and Senator Taqizadeh that this group tended to look. The group was interested in Freemasonry as a possible means of cohesion and both Mr. 'Ala and Mr. Taqizadeh were supposed once to have had Masonic affiliations or leanings. Hence, their influence in affairs apart, they appeared to be the sort of elder statesmen from whose beneficient support the group might hope to profit. Further, the

group hoped with their support to re-establish the pre-Musaddiq importance of personal contacts in politics.

In this connection, members of the group were very anxious to resume old-fashioned links with the British Embassy. These tentative links seem to have begun to recrudesce after 1945 and to have been a minor feature of political life until 1951. This is not to suggest that these contacts with the British Embassy ever had the tremendous importance ascribed to them by the anti-British press. Nor can this kind of involvement be compared with British Embassy penetration into Iranian affairs between 1941 and 1945. Then matters were only dealt with on a high and, given war-time conditions, reasonably proper level. In 1954 and 1955, the question was of a low-level type of contact – it would have had far less significance in almost any other country than Iran – on the level of chit-chat between minor British officials and Persian intriguers.

In short, one of the aims of the political group was to win the confidence of the English. Happily the men who reopened the English Embassy, though aware of the sincerity of some members of the group, were not accessible. The sincerity of some of these older politicians was exemplified by the assistance they gave to the middle-of-the-roaders who had made false moves in the confusion of the Musaddiq era; in particular to many of those gullible Deputies who had resigned their seats on Musaddiq's suggestion and so incurred the Shah's suspicion of their loyalty. In fact the group worked hard to resuscitate certain damaged reputations and, in a last analysis, it represented conservative elements on the look-out for power at a time when a new distribution of power was taking place, and when new men, not least the entrepreneurs, seemed to be coming forward as rivals. Above all the group's leaders wanted to obtain influence over the Shah; and if possible to gain foreign support in doing so. They pinned their hopes on the British and declared themselves anti-American. They saw the Shah surrounded by soldiers and *nouveaux riches* and under American influence. But the British were not interested and the group eventually split up. One or two of its members found other ways to power later. When they did, it was the Shah who commanded them, not they the Shah.

Conclusion of a new oil agreement was made public on 5th August 1954 and was passed by the Majlis on 21st October by 113 votes out of 119; the Senate passed it seven days later, by 41 votes out of 49. A consortium of eight companies was to operate Iran's southwestern oilfields and the refinery at Abadan. The eight companies' shares were held as follows: 40 per cent by the A.I.O.C., which from December 1955 was known as the British Petroleum

Company; 40 per cent by a group of five American companies, Gulf Oil Corporation, Socony-Vacuum Oil Company Inc., Standard Oil Company (New Jersey), Standard Oil Company of California, and the Texas Company – each having 8 per cent; 14 per cent was held by the Bataafse Petroleum Maatschappij N.V., and 6 per cent by the Compagnie Française des Pétroles.

The percentages of the eight United States companies have subsequently been modified from 8 to 7 per cent in respect of each one and, as from 29th April 1955, under an arrangement agreed between the Iranian Government and the Consortium, one-eighth of the percentage interests of the original eight American Companies (amounting to 5 per cent) was further distributed among nine other American companies. These are the American Independent, the Atlantic Refining, Hancock Oil, Pacific Western Oil (now Getty Oil) Companies, the Richfield Oil Corporation, San Jacinto Petroleum Corporation, Standard Oil (Ohio) and the Tidewater Oil Companies.

The A.I.O.C.'s claims, and any counter-claims, were to be regarded as settled for a payment to the Company of £25,000,000. This indemnification was to be paid over a period of ten years beginning on 1st January 1957, without interest. In addition the injured Company was to receive from other participating Companies £32·4 million within about a year of the resumption of oil exports from Iran; and the sterling equivalent of 10 cents per U.S. barrel (approximately 5*s*. 4*d*. a ton of crude oil at the rate of exchange current in 1954) on crude oil and other products exported from Iran, except those the B.P.C. itself exported, until a total of 510 million dollars had been paid. In this context it should be remembered that the A.I.O.C. had built up the Iranian oil industry single-handed.

Profits within Iran from the industry were to be shared equally between the Iranian Government and the Consortium. The new agreement was to last twenty-five years and there was provision for three five-year extensions. The area to be exploited was approximately 100,000 square miles, but in connection with the five-year extensions of the Consortium Agreement reduction of this area was projected.[1]

In order to supply Iran's internal needs, the National Iranian Oil Company was left with operational control of the small field at Nafi-i-Shah on the western border with Iraq, and of the Kirmanshah refinery connected to it. Distribution of petroleum products

[1] Early in 1965 a Supplementary Consortium Agreement has revised earlier arrangements and given Iran further advantages.

in Iran was also to be the N.I.O.C.'s responsibility. N.I.O.C. was to look after all services not directly part of the producing, refining and carrying operations undertaken by the Consortium; but the cost of services provided by N.I.O.C. was largely recoverable from the Companies. These services included industrial training, public transport, road maintenance, housing, medical care and social welfare.

The agreement was complex, so much care being taken (a) to devise a suitably international character in the new operating and exploiting groups, and (b) to prevent anything that would even resemble the old arrangements whereby the country's oil industry had been dominated by the A.I.O.C. From the outset of discussions in December 1953, British and American oil companies were confronted with the problem of how to reintegrate Persian oil into world marketing arrangements. His colleagues and Mr. Herbert Hoover Jnr., who took a prominent part in the resumption of negotiations, had to consider, besides its economic viability, the political desirability of re-activating the Iranian share in the world oil industry. Since production from Iraq and from other Arab areas had been extensively promoted to fill the deficit in supplies caused by the stoppage in Iran, a number of by no means uncomplicated adjustments had to be envisaged. States such as Iraq, whose own oil revenues had greatly expanded as a result of Dr. Musaddiq's action in Iran, were on the *qui vive* lest Western *political* anxieties over Iran's *economic* plight were going to be detrimental to them.

Two operating companies were provided for, one to prospect for and extract the commodity, the other to refine it. These two companies were to be incorporated under the law of the Netherlands but to have their headquarters in Iran, which was an important break with the past, for the A.I.O.C. had been firmly based in London. Two of the seven Directors on the Board of each company represented Iran; the other five Directors, the Consortium. The two companies were to purchase from the N.I.O.C. the oil they exported and N.I.O.C. had the option of receiving this payment in crude oil up to 12½ per cent of the total export. Products for Iranian consumption were to be made available to the N.I.O.C. at about cost price.

Estimates of oil income were of great concern to Iran. Beginning after an initial period of three months whilst the industry got underway again, these were to reach £150,000,000 for the first three years; £31,000,000 in the first year, rising to £67,000,000 in the third year. A separate agreement between Great Britain and Iran provided for all transactions with Iran and its National Oil Company to be normally settled in sterling. The British Government undertook to give Iran facilities for converting sterling into dollars.

In February 1954 Ambassadors were exchanged between Iran and Great Britain and a novel feature of the new British Ambassador's arrival was a press conference, in which he gave a sparkling performance. Press reports of the new phase of relations this inaugurated were accompanied by photographs of the Ambassador showing the gestures and frank visage with which he accompanied and emphasised his statements and replies. It was all very modern, very friendly; and showed the Iranian flair for newspaper and magazine production to advantage. Yet when, not long before, the decision had been made to resume diplomatic relations with Britain, men had appeared on the streets of Tehran wearing black mourning bands. However, the Shah and General Zahedi were now more definitely in charge. The press had once more been brought under control; but as a result of this the old practice of the latter days of Nasiru'd-Din Shah's reign began to recur and the clandestine circulation of pamphlets and leaflets were resorted to by the opposition. These 'night-letters', as they were called, were generally attributed either to the Tudeh or to the Iran Party.

Iranian businessmen soon followed, indeed several had preceded, Mr. 'Ali Soheily, Iran's new Ambassador to London. An order for a thousand British tractors and some agricultural machinery was given to Britain to the amount of over a million pounds sterling. In November the Iranian Government accepted an offer from the British Government of a credit for £10,000,000 under the Export Guarantee Act, to be spent on goods and services from Great Britain. This acceptance, however, was subject to the consent of the Majlis and scope was also left for further discussion on details.

The Anglican Bishop in Iran was allowed to return. This return symbolised the re-admission of the English, but the general manager of the Consortium's operations was not English but Dutch, and his immediate subordinates were either Dutch or American. Apart from one pipe-line and production expert, British technicians in the oil industry were kept in the background. Fortunately the senior pipe-line and production engineer in question was personally liked by the Iranian nationalisers and nationalists, who regarded him as entirely non-political and who could talk to him because he was a good linguist and spoke perfect French, a feature very endearing to Iranian officials whether their own French is good or not. This was fortunate since to him must largely be attributed the rapidity with which production, once reactivated, proceeded to outstrip the most optimistic expectations. On the refinery side a handful of senior Iranian engineers, trained under the A.I.O.C., had succeeded in keeping the great Abadan installation in such good order that

little difficulty was encountered in putting it back into operation.

By 1956 some of the older Iranian workers in the oil industry were loud in their complaints that they did not like 'a pigeon belonging to two coops', and that they longed for the old days when Englishmen alone were in charge. It is very hard to satisfy everybody, but these small grumbles in the oil areas were as nothing compared with the restlessness and smouldering bitterness that by 1955 had become apparent in Tehran. The Tudeh purge and much-publicised revelations of Tudeh infiltration in the Army, and of the possession by communists – and Russia – of Iran's 'most important military secrets', may have done plenty to excite American solicitude for Iran, which had, it appeared, so nearly been the prey to subversion of a most serious kind. But the revelations did very little to promote the happiness of the Iranian people. On the contrary they drove those intellectuals who were in greatest danger of arrest and torture out of the country, and succeeded in almost entirely alienating from the Shah and the Government the sympathies of those who remained. To the burden of distress felt by the relatives and parents of the young officers, teachers and students who were in custody, and persistently rumoured to have undergone torture, was added a general sense of grief and shame among people of all classes in cities like Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan and Shiraz, where young people more than elsewhere had engaged in pro-communist activities.

It became too dangerous for anybody openly to express their thoughts or their anger and a reversion to ancient habits of reticence occurred, which meant the silent nurturing of resentment against the ruler and his senior officers. A distinction was sometimes drawn between those officers and jailers who showed leniency towards political prisoners, and those whose sadistic zeal no doubt exceeded both the wishes and the commands of their superiors. A certain amount of rather grim humour was also sometimes betrayed by those who had themselves suffered or were recounting the sufferings of others; but neither this nor the recognition that not all officers were equally perfidious diminished the general bitterness that was felt against the army and ultimately against the Shah.

The security services being run by the army continued to show growing efficiency and, since this was attributed to the effectiveness of American advisers on security matters, much of the opprobrium attaching to these services was extended to the Americans. Rumours were so ugly that it was tempting to ascribe them to a foreign power bent on denigrating the Shah's rule and his Western supporters. It came as a shock to find that the case was not perhaps as

simple as this and that there was some truth in the talk, not of direct American participation, but certainly of the cruelty of a few of the Iranians entrusted with the interrogation of communist suspects. It is still a surprise to discover how little was reported of these matters in the press of the English-speaking world, and how little they are menitoned in the records in English of events in Iran during the years between 1954 and 1956, when life in Tehran was overshadowed by fears of arrest and by gossip about what happened to those unfortunate enough to be arrested, and when people used to whisper with awe the names of certain well-known prisons situated on the outskirts of the city or in wilder and remoter parts of the country.

Perhaps foreigners were unaware of the reign of terror going on in Iran at that time, but for those who wished to see the Shah become a beloved and effective sovereign, whatever allowance had to be made for the rumours being exaggerated or inspired by foreign communists, they were extremely disturbing rumours nevertheless. They were disturbing on the grounds of humanity alone; but also on political grounds their effect in implanting a gulf of bitterness between the Shah and the nation seemed ominous.

Throughout 1954 and 1955 the Soviet Union was not inactive, because of fears that Iran might join the Baghdad Pact; while in any event loans continued to be received from the United States – another 150 million dollars in 1955 for instance – and contracts for development schemes continued to be let to Western firms. An Anglo-French consortium was commissioned to build an £11½ million pipe-line from the southern oilfields to Tehran and a British firm engaged to supervise a £30 million road reconstruction project. American, French and West German companies were engaged to supervise the building of 770 agricultural schools, 780 art and technical training centres, 245 health centres, 400 village clinics and 160 hospitals. The last arrangements resulted in a crop of stories to the effect that the schools and colleges whose supervision was allotted to American interests were really intended as barracks and military installations. Stories of this kind did not need Russia to invent them : they could merely arise from traditional Iranian fears of giving so much latitude to one side that the other might in consequence become more menacing.

The Russians invited the Shah to the Soviet Union and visits were also planned for deputations from the Iranian Parliament. Similar deputations visited England and the Shah advised them to make a close study of British Parliamentary institutions.

He advised the Parliamentary Mission to Russia to make clear to

their Soviet hosts that Iran's defensive measures were not intended in any way to threaten Irano-Soviet friendship; nor were they in excess of Iran's rights as a nation. This message was necessary because Soviet gestures of friendship in the summer of 1955 did not prevent the Shah from receiving President Bayar of Turkey in September and from announcing Iran's adherence to the Baghdad Pact (since 1958 the Central Treaty Organisation) on 11th October 1955. Thus Soviet efforts, by overt friendship or in more covert ways, to prevent Iran's abdication of her neutral position had been to no purpose. The Majlis had approved the Shah's decision unanimously on 23rd October, but on 12th October Russia had protested violently. The visit of seven Soviet musicians was cancelled by the Russian Government and later on Iran was touched in a tender spot (tender also for Russia) when 40,000 tons of Iranian rice destined for the U.S.S.R. under the 1945 Trade Agreement was not accepted.

However, by December 1955 just enough amity had been restored for the Iranian parliamentary representatives to make their Russian journey as planned. Meanwhile Iran, through the mouth of its War Minister, had made eminently plain its motives in joining the alliance with Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq and Great Britain : joining the Baghdad Pact, it was considered, would lead to improved economic conditions and more American aid. It could also mean a more efficient and more fully equipped army. Iran had come off the fence, and was now allied with the West, hopeful, as was often hinted, that America would ultimately come into the Pact, instead of remaining a friendly onlooker.

The over-all effect, so far as the West and the North Atlantic Treaty countries were concerned, was a more definite commitment to the regime in Iran. In British and American official circles criticism of the Shah became distinctly unpopular; not that very much interest in Persian affairs was shown in England at all, in spite of some commercial and engineering firms' realisation that Iran might offer outlets for goods and scope for employment. On the whole England remained apathetic.

In the United States, however, the criticism which was being increasingly heard from Iranian students there against the existing regime in their own country was attracting the notice of liberal newspapers, organisations and individuals. While a number of former officials of the Musaddiq regime had found refuge in the United States and were acting as the mentors of dissatisfied Iranian students in American Universities, the students themselves were not slow to take advantage of freedom of speech which they found in

America and began to stage demonstrations and publish defamatory articles which greatly embarrassed the Imperial Iranian Embassy in Washington and which the United States Government could not, of course, do anything to stop. Thus during the years influential American citizens found their sympathies engaged to an appreciable degree by Iranian students, of whose country they often knew very little. The State Department was increasingly exposed to questions from Congress, to telephone calls from anxious Bishops, and to Iranian Embassy protests over press reports adverse to the Shah and his Government.

On the home front the Shah attempted to ensure that the new Majlis which assembled in June 1956 should contain a younger element. The Minister of the Interior, under whose direction provincial authorities were responsible for organising the elections, made efforts, in some notable instances, to substitute sons for fathers in the Chamber's composition. The ousted parents hoped to be compensated by seats in the Senate; but not all were gratified. It was clear that the Shah wished gradually to try and weed out the old politicians; there was a noticeable tendency in his more senior officers publicly to hint that some elderly politicans were a bugbear. It was also apparent that, with the support of the army, the Shah was exercising an increasing amount of executive power. A loyal senator who ventured to advise him that he who rules must ultimately bear responsibility – under the Constitution the King is not responsible – and remind him that, as the Iranians say, 'the wider the roof, the greater the weight of snow', incurred lasting disfavour and was not re-appointed to the Senate by the Shah nor permitted to put himself up for election. (Of the sixty members of the Senate, thirty are appointed by the Shah and thirty elected.)

Rural development works – which sometimes seemed to run parallel to Point IV schemes – were promoted and an attempt made to find money for them and, by raising a five per cent levy on income from land, to achieve more social equity. Another approach to the connected problems of social equity and to the difficulty of persuading the rich landowners to disgorge some of their wealth was made when, also in 1956, under the Income Tax Law land tax was raised to a basic ten per cent on net profits and a super-tax imposed on receipts above a certain level. Announcements of government-sponsored anti-corruption campaigns were frequent but made little real impact, those penalised being usually the less culpable minor officials who were the more defenceless and less dangerous to single out. The powerful landlords and people with wealth to dispose of, favours to grant, influence, real or pretended, with which to silence or

sweeten officials, remained outside the net of the law and could circumvent tax demands.

Meanwhile measures continued whereby the Shah might obviate the risk of mob support again being commanded by his opponents. In January 1956 both Razm-Ara's assassin and the Fidayan-i-Islam leader, Navab Safavi, were killed; the former executed, the latter shot on attempting escape after being taken into custody. A leading member of the Central Committee of the Tudeh, Dr. Murtiza Yazdi, one of the intellectuals trained in Berlin before 1933, had been executed in 1955, when six of the Army officers sentenced at the Tudeh trial in 1954 were also executed; though the death sentence of thirty others was commuted to life imprisonment. On 17th November 1955, Mr. 'Ala, the Prime Minister, had been fired on by an assailant who admitted to being a member of the Fedayan-i-Islam and to be endeavouring to prevent the Prime Minister attending the Baghdad Pact Conference. This episode, while scarcely injuring Mr. 'Ala at all, had served to indicate that in 1955 the forces of opposition were still capable of taking positive action (a point that was no doubt noted by United States observers). It was this attempt which resulted in the arrest of the leader of the Fidayan-i-Islam and his subsequent death. His arrest was followed by a statement that this extremist religious group had received money from the Tudeh Party – although it must be conceded that an extremist religious group could oppose Iran's entry into the British-sponsored Baghdad Pact without communist encouragement, but on the grounds of warding off foreign influence.

The stern steps against communists and alleged communists, which also had the effect of intimidating the populace in general, continued, and so cowed were the people that Dr. Musaddiq's release in August 1956 passed without incident. He retired to a village near Tehran where he has lived ever since. His name remained a force until 1961; after that conjuring with it has been limited in the main to disaffected Iranians, mostly students, abroad, who continue to refer to him in their pamphlets and broadsheets. He himself could not again be a political force. His sarcastic remarks about the way he was abandoned by the *mardum-i-Iran*, the people of Iran, suggest that he neither wants nor expects to be. He is reported to have learnt with delight the English saying that 'a people gets the government it deserves'.

In conjunction with rural development schemes, such as the building of new cottages and attempts to improve village sanitation, a law was promulgated in the spring of 1956 for the creation of village, district and provincial councils and an Institute of Social

Reform and Village Development was established. The Shah seemed to be beginning to work on provincial and rural development as part of a process, at first very slow, of making contact with the rustic majority and strengthening the government's position outside the capital. Connected with this was a gradual approach to the revitalisation of the provinces; to breaking the spell of Tehran and reducing the over centralisation that had originated under Reza Shah and had been accentuated under Musaddiq. After Musaddiq's fall the Shah had developed the habit of regularly seeing the veteran politician, Sayyid Ziau'd-Din Tabataba'i; the necessity of reactivating provincial centres with a larger measure of autonomy given to them had been one of the Sayyid's chief recommendations ever since his brief spell in power in 1921.

At the same time disturbing scandals were reported from outlying districts, of extortions by the gendarmes placed in remote areas to keep the peace, so that Gendarmes were sometimes murdered by angry villagers. The murder of a party of Americans and their guide in Baluchistan, by a bandit called Dad Shah, also occasioned alarm. There was first the inference that the Shah's government was still too insecure to deserve the confidence of its western well-wishers; as one of the Shah's aims was to attract foreign capital, this factor was of considerable importance. But in addition apprehensions were aroused, with origins deep in Persian history, about subversion that began on the perimeters of the realm and moved in gradually towards the centre. The Dad Shah episode was linked with the sporadic murders of gendarmes, in Fars and the remoter tracts of the south. The attention these incidents aroused and official reticence about them indicated the extent of high level anxiety to gain the support of the peasant majority; any event, however insignificant, which proved the existence of deep hostility to agents of the Government among the rural masses therefore excited the utmost vigilance. Extra care was observable in the selection of military commanders for the province of Fars; and the execution of Dad Shah, although he had proved elusive for a long time, was given wide publicity.

The tempo of wooing the peasant majority mounted only very slowly; in 1956 and 1957 hopes were still heavily weighted in favour of the Plan Organisation as a means of proving the benevolence of the Shah's rule. If construction works could be achieved rapidly and the face of Iran noticeably changed and the people given fresh amenities and avenues of employment, then the ever-present fear of revolution might be reduced, eventually to vanish altogether. But the hoped-for achievements were not materialising

quickly. Frustration was rising; Tehran and some tribal areas remained under military government; domestic commentators were beginning to talk of how little progress had been made during the fifteen years the Shah had been on the throne. At the same time, the forces working against the swift accomplishment of construction plans varied, from the elements dissatisfied with their share in spoils and power to those insidious enemies, without and within, who were determined not to allow the Shah the victory that successful development might assure him.

The Director of the Plan Organisation insisted on careful surveys and detailed paper-work being carried out before actual building, of the sort that would soon change the landscape, might begin. But if changes are to be made, the Iranians expect rapid and tangible results; especially when large sums of money are being spent. Mr. Ebtehaj was not particularly interested in propaganda. He was Iranian enough to know that promises of the early fruition of major plans would have little effect on an astute people, already sceptical of promises. He believed in all or nothing. Accordingly, as with long-term development projects in Iraq, no immediate results of expenditure and effort were apparent to the populace. Meanwhile, disappointment and popular scepticism about development schemes were made use of by the anti-Ebtehaj, anti-Plan Organisation sections of the politically and economically influential class; and, in a final analysis, served the purpose of anti-monarchist forces as well.

On one occasion Mr. Ebtehaj did attempt to expedite part of a large undertaking, although it meant a diversion of effort, to provide the people in the capital with evidence of work done. But the attempt failed because of delay in the technical Ministry concerned. Complaints, in the Press and the Majlis, about vast sums expended on planning and preliminary investigations, continued. Free enterprise would not submit to the state planning authority or to its Director.

Unfortunately, the Plan Organisation had to share the task of carrying out development projects with various Ministries, ministerial approval being necessary before plans could be put into effect. This arrangement was necessary because the Minister could answer Majlis questions, while the Director of the Plan Organisation could not. Mr. Ebtehaj had no political status and one of the objects in setting up his Organisation had been to keep the Seven Year Plan free as far as possible from political fluctuations that could influence either its personnel or aims.

In the end, a bill became law on 21st February 1959 which placed the Plan Organisation directly under the Prime Minister's control;

Mr. Ebtehaj resigned as soon as this happened. The Administrator-General of the Plan Organisation now became the Prime Minister's officially nominated deputy. The change can be interpreted as meaning that the Ministries had won in the battle against the Plan Organisation : a body outside the machinery of politics no longer had the disposal of large sums of public money, and the finances set aside for development plans could now be merged with the main body of funds over which the different Ministries wrangled. Beyond the ranks of the Cabinet there were opportunists who must have welcomed the change, if only because it spelt Mr. Ebtehaj's defeat and because Cabinet Ministers could be made more amenable than he had been. Since, however, by 1959 the Shah himself had gained so much executive power, it might have seemed to some that the change had come too late; that now it would be the Shah, not the Ministers and their friends, who took control. There were signs that other agencies till then outside the control of the Cabinet were also to have their wings clipped; for when the status of the Plan Organisation was changed the Shah was also showing increased interest in the running of the National Iranian Oil Company. This organisation had, like the Plan Organisation, been considered autonomous and outside the political establishment.

In noticing the tendency, manifest from 1951 onwards, to set up agencies outside the normal government machinery, it is necessary to bear in mind the laws which had been passed prohibiting additions to the overcrowded Civil Service. Qavam had started efforts immediately after the war to close recruitment to the Civil Service. In 1945 it had been hoped at least to stabilise the cadre and, although recruits could still be admitted on a contract basis, agencies like the Plan Organisation and the Oil Company had provided an outlet for surplus technical and administrative personnel which would otherwise have been occupying Civil Service posts or clamouring for admission. Factors of this kind confused the original purpose for which these agencies had been designed, so that their effectiveness was damaged, particularly in the case of the Plan Organisation. The reasons for the establishment of the National Iranian Oil Company had been less ambiguous, but a Plan Organisation had come into being partly in response to clichés about development which were learnt from the West. The substance implicit in the clichés was often ignored, while the organisations for which they afforded the pretext were made to serve a variety of purposes other than those for which they were primarily intended. This being so, it is not surprising that the status of the Plan Organisation should not have been regarded as immutable, especially once one of its

subsidiary purposes had been achieved, in the absorption of excess personnel.

One American diplomatic observer quite rightly remarked that Mr. Ebtehaj differed from many of his fellow countrymen in being sufficiently Western in outlook really to believe in the clichés about planned development; he therefore could admit no ambiguity in the purpose which his Plan Organisation was meant to serve and was unable to suffer its abandonment to the exigencies of day-to-day political considerations. Nor could he tolerate the pressures of political cliques subject to pressure from influential but possibly corrupt groups which worked through the Cabinet or numerous 'High Consultative Councils'. These Councils were also a feature of the time. The extra-governmental agencies each had one to inspect its affairs; there was a Council for the Plan Organisation, for the National Insurance Company, for the Organisation of Workers' Insurance and for the National Oil Company. So long as the direction of an agency was in the hands of a strong man, the Councils were little more than a façade, again designed to absorb men who would otherwise have been unemployable, such as former dignitaries of the government, retired senior Civil Servants and former members of Majlis whom it was thought desirable to keep occupied in positions having some semblance of influence. But when the direction of an agency was weakened, as, for example, by interference from the Shah or the Cabinet, then the Consultative Council concerned could begin to feel its feet – and even be encouraged to do so by a higher power determined that no direction, of any organisation in the State, should be allowed to enjoy unbridled independence for too long.

Big agencies, on the other hand, like the Plan Organisation and the N.I.O.C., as well as the smaller ones, served in the post-Musaddiq years temporarily to keep power diffused; each agency was a separate pocket of influence and a separate rallying point for job-seekers and jobbers. Thus the Shah had a diffusion of forces and influences that would counter and check each other; by 1959 perhaps his need for this was less pressing, hence the way in which he began gradually to curtail these agencies' activities.

Military Government was abolished as early as April 1957 in some areas, including the capital. This was another sign that it was deemed feasible gradually to start a different system of controls. The change in policy was inaugurated when Dr. Minuchihr Iqbal became Prime Minister in that month, succeeding Mr. 'Ala, who had been in office since General Zahedi's resignation on health grounds two years before. Another reason why military government could be

dispensed with was that by 1957 the security services had been supplemented by an organisation for the control of political opinion and the press. This new organisation was known as SAVAK[1] and commanded by the former military governor of Tehran, General Teymur Bakhtiar. Another of the officers who had distinguished themselves at the reconquest of Azerbaijan, General Bakhtiar was also a relative of Queen Soraya and intimate with the Shah, to whom he showed, in spite of occasional rumours to the contrary, unwavering loyalty. Happily SAVAK included one or two young officers whose personalities enabled them to appear relatively harmless, if not respectable, in the eyes of a few of the older intellectuals; but only a very few.

While the press was being brought under control, SAVAK encouraged an enlightened scheme under American guidance for the training of young journalists. In this way efforts have been made to create a corps of journalists for the future whose standards of journalistic ethics may be better than those of their predecessors. The attempt prompts esteem, albeit qualified by the thought that 'certainly good was not to be denied in itself because motives were a little mixed'. Thus it is possible that out of a period without freedom a better press might emerge; the effects of repression on literature generally and on drama cannot, however, be regarded in quite such a dispassionate light.

The year 1941 saw the opening of a freedom of literary expression which had been almost totally denied during the reign of Reza Shah; great was the advantage taken of this new freedom between 1941 and 1951. Men like Sadiq Hedayat, Muhammad Mas'ud, Sadiq Chubak, Jalal Al-Ahmad and Buzurg 'Alavi came forward as writers of genius. Their appearance called to mind the beginnings of modern Persian literature in the early years of the century. But these beginnings had been discouraged by the 'eclipse of hope' in 1911 and by what happened in the first World War. They were again taken up, however, in Berlin in the 1920's, only again to be discouraged by the conditions which prevailed under Reza Shah. The second War, therefore, brought a third release; uninhibited development was possible until the advent of Musaddiq. The damage done to liberty during the confusion and violence of the Musaddiq period may be judged by the discouragement which soon became manifest in the purer forms of literature. Although Buzurg 'Alavi produced two novels about that time, to all intents and purposes the more reflective type of literature ceased, and the repression that followed continued to stifle it.

[1] *Sazman-i-Amniyat va Kishvar*, Organisation for Security of the State.

On the other hand, forms which do not require the same degree of tranquillity in which to mature made some headway during the days of Musaddiq, largely because of the active encouragement given to them by the Tudeh organisation. For example, drama developed and reference has already been made to the quality of certain articles in Tudeh Party newspapers. In particular the latter promoted the creation of a modern literary medium, more closely related to the speech of the people than the literary language of the Safavid and Qajar periods had been and at the same time of an ordered and literary quality of great clarity and vitality. Drama flourished at a theatre in Tehran to which allusion has already been made, and which was closed after the fall of Dr. Musaddiq. After 1951 journalism became apathetic under a repression that, considering some of the flights to which Persian newspapers had attained in the preceding period, was probably salutary and certainly inevitable. Editors had to exercise caution in what they printed and steps were taken to reduce the number of newspapers and magazines and so to reduce the opportunities for blackmail. It was said that editors were told the items they may not discuss; these included the Royal Family, the Army and the Americans; but not, it appears, the British.

After 1953 taste generally was dominated by the society of *parvenus* who assumed influential positions in the wake of returning royalty. Culture either became the handmaiden of nationalist and rightist propaganda, in which case it ceased to be genuine; or sank into a sullen and shadowy retirement, in which case it was either inarticulate or articulated only in various forms of rather arid pedantry. American influence began to be felt and was largely of the anti-intellectual kind associated with the anti-communist ideology of the United States in those days. This meant that several of the finer models which might have been offered from American literature were not considered suitable. An American organisation called the Franklin Institute opened a branch in Tehran in 1954 to encourage and pay for the translation into Persian from English of American books, technical as well as literary (the strange phenomenon occurred of American poetry being translated when some of Walt Whitman's verse was published in Persian). Pedantry was encouraged when the Shah gave prizes for what were selected as the best books of the year. Only books that were found to be politically innocuous, although, it was hoped, of educational value, were chosen, and on one occasion choice was made of a work by a religious authority on the Muslim canons for personal conduct and cleanliness – a work which aroused no little disgust among

intellectuals. Following the example of the Franklin Institute, an Imperial Foundation for Translation and Publishing was established under Court patronage. Franklin concentrated on translations but the Imperial organisation branched out; in addition to arranging for translations, it published editions of the Persian classics, edited from manuscripts for the first time or re-edited. In this way a channel for employment was opened for those men of letters who were acceptable to the authorities and willing to share in the bounty which the authorities were offering; the rates for translation or editing which were paid by both the Franklin Institute and its Iranian counterpart were high. These operations gave a great impetus to the book trade, which suddenly became a booming business. They also led to great improvements in book production and especially noteworthy are some of the handsome children's books which the Franklin Institute has fostered. The stock has, however, been chiefly pedantic; only slowly are signs beginning to appear that creative literature may be reviving for the fourth time in the century, which may mean that a more positive social and political atmosphere, fraught with greater hope than before, is beginning to emerge. Writers are thus perhaps beginning to feel that they can write honestly without risking official displeasure; but like much in Iranian life, the literature, which is Iran's noblest heritage, does not die; the threads sink from view to return to the surface when times become more propitious.

A small number of intellectuals have withdrawn into private coteries, cut off from the main stream of events and nursing fantasies about such matters as the world's end and the ravishment of Iran by corrupting foreign influences. Some intellectuals consider that Western culture is a poison emanating from an immature civilisation and, whereas it was once the 'secret' of the West that Iranian intellectuals eagerly sought, some of them now believe that Western science is but a new form of ignorance, and that only the more ancient peoples have plumbed the most important mysteries of man's being. Recently a book appeared about the 'disease' of Westernism; it was, incidentally, banned by the authorities. Men who think like its author are probably in a minority among educated Iranians, but history shows that no intellectual movement in Iran, however small its beginnings, can be totally ignored; Iran has for many ages been the home of religions, and movements have started there, later to become the cult of the soldiers of Rome, as Mithraism did, or to be the bane of Medieval Christendom, as was Manichaeism.

Reference was made earlier to the diffusion of power in the imme-

diate post-Musaddiq period, and while any coalition of forces which could threaten the Throne was prevented, efforts were made to win over certain extremists. One particular effort, designed to win over the '*ulama*, deserves a passing reference. In 1955 observers were surprised when the Government suddenly instituted moves against the religious minority of the Baha'is; although there is religious toleration in Iran, action against the Baha'is was condoned on the grounds that their faith is not recognised as a separate religion. No less a person than the Army Chief of Staff took charge of the sequestration of the Baha'is' main centre in Tehran. The dome of this building was destroyed and the building itself made the headquarters of the city's military government. The true motives for this persecution are still not clear, but it seems likely that there was some desire to placate Muslim religious zealots: the persecution might also have been prompted by less extreme members of the religious hierarchy, who wanted to make a horse-deal between themselves and the Shah. The move may also have been intended to placate extreme nationalists in so far as charges had been levelled against the Baha'is of being pro-foreign – their chief centre is outside the country, on Mount Carmel, and they have a number of adherents and important centres in the United States. Criticism of their persecution in the United States was strong and the Government very soon abandoned it. Some restrictions on the employment of Baha'is were promulgated but, since Baha'is tend to be among the most conscientious and best educated people in the realm, not employing them was an inconvenience from which their persecutors suffered as much as the victims. It was not long before those who molested them were arrested and this short but ugly recrudescence of religious intolerance was at an end.

In 1956 the Iranian Government announced that it was no longer prohibited for foreigners to call the country Persia; either Iran or Persia was equally permitted, although of course Iranians themselves never call their country by any other name than Iran.

When Dr. Iqbal became Prime Minister, on 3rd April 1957 – as has already been noticed in connection with the withdrawal of military governments – a new phase was inaugurated. Dr. Iqbal showed himself the man to do the Shah's bidding, the completely docile Prime Minister. His energy was a commendation in his favour and his impressive mien also an asset. He had succeeded Dr. Siasi as Chancellor of the University of Tehran in 1954 and had later been made Minister of Court, when Mr. 'Ala became Prime Minister. While Chancellor of the University, Dr. Iqbal had proved himself vigilant, and thoughtful for others. He had shown that he

could assuage the grievances of men who felt dissatisfied, and he had won popularity by ridding the University precincts of the presence of soldiers who had been placed there after the arrest of Dr. Musaddiq. His appointment to the University had been an augury of more stable times to come.

His promotion to the rank of Prime Minister was likewise an augury; an augury that the Shah was advancing to the stage when he could directly and overtly inspire positive measures to a greater degree than before. Iqbal, an eminently honest man with a reputation little sullied by scandal, and with a number of adherents of his own among conservative sections of society, was the man to stand up to the Majlis. He could say things in the House, in his measured tones and with his imposing presence, that many an Iranian of his class would perhaps have been too proud, perhaps too silly, to say : it was Dr. Iqbal who told the Majlis that he was the servant of the Shah, obedient to the last degree, there to carry out the policies that were given him.

The significance of statements of this kind from the Prime Minister was not lost on the National Assembly and it was clear that the Prime Minister was no longer the Majlis's servant. Using the Persian word, *chakir*, for servant, the Prime Minister himself told all and sundry that he was the servant of the Shah : the office of Prime Minister had been finally captured by the throne. The bonds of this new captivity were to be stretched to a dangerous point by Dr. Iqbal's successor, but in 1962 the position the Shah had at last won was retrieved immediately danger was smelt.

There was little Majlis reaction to these final indications of the Shah's taking over. Dr. Pirnia protested against government adjustments of the retail price of kerosene oil because this was an invasion of the N.I.O.C.'s sphere of action, but while exciting much sympathy he called forth few supporting voices. Meanwhile the Majlis was not displeased to have its mandate extended from two to four years, the number of its members increased from 162 to 200.

Indeed, the signs were that, once he had gained control of the office of Prime Minister, the Shah still intended to keep the constitutional symbol, the National Assembly, functioning. His urgent request to the members of the Parliamentary Delegation to Britain, that they should closely study the British parliamentary system, had not been in the least insincere. It seems clear that His Majesty always intended to make the Constitution workable and that he had not forgotten the lessons of his old mentor, and first Prime Minister, Muhammad 'Ali Furughi. He now began to tackle the problem of opposition by attempting to organise it on a parliamentary footing.

It may be supposed that on his own visits abroad, to Europe, the United States and, in 1956, to India and Turkey, he had himself closely observed different political institutions. Incidentally, the State Visit paid to Russia, also in 1956, had been marked by much splendour; but the Shah had made no concessions on his Baghdad Pact policy. In November, however, a twelve-months barter trade agreement with Russia had been arranged, to the value of over nine million pounds.

In May 1955 an 'opposition' parliamentary party – from the start an attempt was made to have it firmly associated with the Majlis – was formed, called *Hizb-i-Mardum*, People's Party. One of the Shah's most loyal younger supporters and a personal friend, the Amir Asadu'llah 'Alam, was entrusted with the onerous, and what might have turned out to be the invidious, task of leading this new party. Mr. 'Alam had been the Minister of the Interior responsible for the last elections, when an effort was made to make the composition of the Majlis more youthful. Mr. 'Alam, with the help of his assistant, Dr. Khanlari, one of Iran's leading intellectuals, had also instituted effective measures to curb the habit of opium-smoking among the poorer classes. Though their misery might be temporarily forgotten over the pipe, it could not in the long run be other than aggravated by the addiction, one of whose worst effects was to reduce an addict's dependents to beggary.

Foreign observers and local politicians were sceptical of the success of a two-party system introduced from above. The 'Government' party, headed by Dr. Iqbal, was to be called the Nationalist Party, *Hizb-i-Milliyun*. The Shah made great use of the evocative word 'national', and emphasises in his *Memoirs* that his aim was a 'positive' nationalism, in contrast to Dr. Musaddiq's 'negative' brand. Scepticism about the new party system, while no doubt justifiable, was perhaps one-sided. It ignored one result of the system: formation of the parties, a very courageous new departure, had the effect of giving members of the Majlis a new preoccupation. Deputies became deeply engaged in pondering over what they should do and which side it would be in their best long-term interest to join. Discontent in general could, moreover, be mitigated by the diversion provided by the new opposition party's widely publicised platform, and among the Party's chief aims was the replacement of large-scale land ownership by small holdings.

Consonant with these diversionary, slightly palliative endeavours was the Shah's New Year pardon for 119 officers who were serving sentences for the Tudeh army plot revealed in 1954. Towards the end of the year, however, came a flurry of arrests of alleged

followers of Dr. Musaddiq. Healthy tranquillity had not yet come to replace the Metternich-style 'peace of the cemetery'. Yet the populace was treated in 1956 to the spectacle of no fewer than three state visits from foreign notables. Adenauer came and so did President Gronchi of Italy, and King Feisal II of Iraq.

The Oil Consortium's output increased to pass the maximum *per diem* before nationalisation. But the Iranian Government was anxious to have other possible oil reserves tapped; in the meantime, another large loan from the International Bank was received. President Gronchi's visit heralded increased Italian commercial involvement, especially in oil affairs. A deal was made which the Court was rumoured to have done much to promote. In July a law was passed which authorised the conclusion of partnership arrangements between the N.I.O.C. and foreign oil companies, in respect of oil reserves outside the Consortium's allocation. A joint organisation was set up called the Société Irano-Italienne des Pétroles (S.I.R.I.P.), in which N.I.O.C. formed a partnership with the Italian firm, Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (E.N.I.). The areas allocated to S.I.R.I.P. were (1) The Zagros Mountains, (2) The coastal waters of the Persian Gulf, and (3) Persian Baluchistan. Inclusion of the last named area resulted in an Irano-Italian sociological and economic survey of the region during the next two years, which was to furnish data of considerable interest, the Italian experts studying the problems of this neglected, impoverished terrain in the light of experience gained in the rehabilitation of their own region of Calabria.

Another result of this Italian interest in Iran has been the fillip given to Persian studies in Italy, which in recent years has produced very able senior scholars in the fields of Iranian languages, history and archaeology (while some of their students show an impressive understanding of Iran and its difficulties).

The aspect of this new agreement which other Western oil concerns most closely watched was, of course, the division arranged for in capital expenditure and profits. N.I.O.C. was to have capital participation : this would be a new experience for the Iranian side in an oil transaction, with realisation of the extensive capital outlay entailed in exploration for oil before any returns can be expected. This item, therefore, made the division of profits, on a 75–25 per cent basis, less glamorous than it might otherwise have been. The Italian company was to receive 25 per cent of the net profits and was, certainly, to finance initial exploration costs; but these were to be recoverable out of profits. Western oil concerns need not have any qualms over these arrangements; nevertheless in the admission

of additional foreign participants to Iran's oil industry a radical new departure had been made.

Another new beginning made in 1956 was given less prominence because its inception was clouded by other factors. An American Company, Messrs. Lilienthal and Clapp, was given a contract to begin surveys for the economic and industrial development of large areas of the largely uncultivated province of Khuzistan. Khuzistan, in the southwest, is watered by the rivers Karun, Kharkheh and Diz. Some relatively small areas of it are today agriculturally productive enough to bear testimony to the region's smiling prosperity in ages past, before its old and intricate irrigation works suffered destruction in ancient conflicts.

Mr. Ebtehaj hoped that the province's fertility might be revived, and Khuzistan also be made an industrial centre; the southern oil industry, still Iran's most highly developed industrial asset, was located there. Mr. Ebtehaj's vision thus embraced two facets of Iran's development, the agrarian and the industrial. Though some believe priority ought to rest with the former, there are many who wish to see Iran less dependent on industrial imports and technologically more advanced. Mr. Ebtehaj's synthesis, however, satisfied few and fuel was added to the fires of opposition that were being stoked against him. The scheme was greeted as another costly affair that would require years of preliminaries before anything visible resulted. The scheme was to include the construction of a large dam on the Diz, to provide irrigation and hydro-electric power, whence would follow electrically-powered factories for such light industries as chemicals and plastics – in which the oil wastes could be utilised.

At the same time, plans were rapidly materialising for a scheme to lead waste gas from the oilfields of Khuzistan to Shiraz by pipeline, to give Shiraz a fertiliser plant. These plans have borne fruit. Lilienthal and Clapp, besides carrying out valuable and detailed surveys of potential minerals and also the climate in nearly the whole of southwestern Iran, have brought major parts of their contract to completion in a far shorter time than the pessimists thought they would. The dam, for example, is now built. But at the time of the inauguration of these plans and works, the conflict between Mr. Ebtehaj and private interests was at its height. Supported by elements at Court, the private interests got permission for the Shiraz gas pipe-line project in spite of Mr. Ebtehaj's opposition to it. His Lilienthal and Clapp proposals were also accepted, but amidst protest; and his loss of the battle over the Shiraz scheme, though not to be compared in magnitude with the Khuzistan Development Scheme, was nonetheless an indication that Mr.

Ebtehaj was losing ground. As we have seen, early in 1959 he finally had to resign.

The unexpected speed with which the Khuzistan development programme was beginning to mature became evident when, already by the end of 1958, a project was embarked upon by an American firm to develop the production and refining of sugar there. This was to cost twenty-three million dollars. It meant the revival of one of the province's most ancient industries, destroyed through disturbances in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Mr. Ebtehaj's Khuzistan scheme differed from other, less fortunate Plan Organisation undertakings in not being tied to the Ministries. Therefore it could not easily be held up in the bureaucratic machine. The region where it was being carried out was also far enough away from Tehran not to attract the attention of despoilers to the same degree as did projects in the north or centred on the capital. Lilienthal and Clapp, taking note of what had happened in other cases, designed their contract to include provision against being victimised by obstruction and impediments beyond their control. They enjoyed a greater measure of freedom to execute works than other foreign undertakings had done, and great was their sagacity in arranging this.

Apart from the sad announcement of the Shah's divorce on 14th March, 1958 was very much the Shah's year and marks a turning point. His marriage to Queen Soraya had not brought him a son. Since the death in an aircraft accident of the Shah's eldest brother, Prince 'Ali Reza, on 2nd November 1954, there had been no-one eligible to succeed to the throne. The Shah's five half-brothers were ineligible because they were the sons of ladies of the Qajar family; relatives of the old dynasty were debarred from accession to the throne. The lack of an heir had caused great anxiety in Court and Government circles. This pressing reason of state eventually compelled the Shah to divorce a wife he deeply loved, as on medical grounds it seemed unlikely that she could become a mother. He did not have recourse to the Muslim male's right to enjoy more than one wife; possibly his overriding desire to discourage such practices made him refrain from setting such a precedent. In 1959 he married Miss Farah Diba and, on 31st October of the next year, the union was blessed with a son.

In early 1958 there was another flurry of arrests, of significance only a warning to those who ventured to criticise the regime too loudly and too persistently; or to think that another revolution might lead to a new and better settlement. The tendency to criticise the Shah continued to be prevalent and was not confined to left-wing or religious circles. In this instance the thirty-four men arrested

were conservatives, but politically extremely inexperienced. Their plot was considered more serious than it might otherwise have been because one of them was an army officer and had been in charge of a section of the General Staff's Intelligence Branch. Most of the others were relatively insignificant, although in the fluidity of Iranian society it is not uncommon for people to think themselves more important than they are; and, indeed, not unusual for people suddenly to assume an unexpected importance.

A case in point is that of the *Shaban Bimukh*, the Brainless Shepherd, as he is called. This man ran a Zurkhanah, 'a House of Strength' or gymnasium, in Tehran, and had been a champion athlete. Because he led gangs on behalf of the Shah in the last days of Musaddiq, he afterwards became of some importance and was to be seen eating in fashionable restaurants. It was partly because they were opposed to the gangsters and profiteers who had received protection since the Shah's return in 1953 that the plotters arrested in 1958 felt dissatisfied; personal ambitions apart, they fitted the Persian saying that the pot is warmer than the soup – they wanted perfection sooner than it could be attained and thought that they could do better than the Shah was doing; not realising that the Shah himself may have been working to a programme and that, all in good time, he would take the kind of action they advocated. Their over-eagerness would not perhaps have passed beyond the stage of harmless criticism of the government among themselves and addressed to a few sympathisers, but unfortunately, having found the British unresponsive, they submitted their proposals to the Americans and were shortly afterwards taken into custody. The measure of the whole affair may be taken from the fact that only one of them, the officer, suffered to any great degree – and he only received the comparatively light sentence of two years' imprisonment and dismissal from the Service. (But since this officer, whose name is Qaraneh, was mentioned with other officers in the report, in *Le Monde* for 24th February 1964, of a further plot against the regime, he is possibly a persistent agitator).

It may be noted here that the Shah had several intelligence organisations working for him, each reporting to him independently; he also made himself accessible to a variety of unofficial informers. Thus there was no prominent person who was not reported on by someone, while to be an informant did not protect anyone from the reports of others. In these circumstances everyone had to act with caution, but at the same time the possibility of someday being admitted to the highest confidence constantly kept ambitions in a state of hopeful anticipation.

Chapter 28

The Shah's Revolution

DURING the year 1958 one of the Iqbal Government's most striking acts was the presentation, in October, of two bills to the Majlis which really indicated firm action against corruption, both inside and outside the National Assembly. The first forbade all government employees, Deputies, Senators and members of the imperial family to have interests in firms holding or seeking government contracts. Deputies who were members of the legal profession were also forbidden to practise. This bill created quite a stir and led to a great deal of soul-searching. Its disinterestedness was emphasised by the fact that its provisions applied to members of the reigning family. The business activities of the Shah's relatives had become more noticeable and had been increasingly a source of evil reports ever since 1955. It was in 1955 that Tehran began to assume rather the air of a boom-town. Though the boom only profited a small number, it was the inevitable consequence of the development schemes which were being, in an extremely disparate manner, hastily promoted.

To a surprising degree post-war construction of houses, flats and office blocks had continued in the capital during the days of Musaddiq, in spite of the economic decline. This illustrates how private capital remained available in quantities at a time when government funds were fast dwindling to their lowest. Building was entirely in the hands of private speculators. Many of them were bazaar merchants seeking the security of bricks and mortar for their money. Some were land-owners, realising wealth in the land of which their proprietorship was threatened, and converting it into house property. A few were men who, as Musaddiq's lieutenants, had profited from government pickings and the disposal of the stores left by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The Company's policy had been to lay in adequate stores of piping, tyres, house furnishings, imported plumbing requirements, tools and so forth, in sufficient quantities to last long periods. During the nationalisation of the Company's assets in Iran, the storage depôts at Ahwaz, Abadan and in the oil-fields were systematically depleted by officials of Dr. Musaddiq's government and their friends. Several new fortunes were made.

Stores were being sold as far afield as Iraq; or being used directly in house-building in Tehran.

However, while it may be seen as evidence of another feature of the Iranians' 'resilience', this activity under Musaddiq was nothing compared to the feverish activity after his fall. Those who had been able to build could now enjoy handsome returns on their flats and offices, letting them to in-coming foreign firms and individuals; Point IV and foreign companies working for the Plan Organisation and oil industry brought an influx of Europeans and Americans. Rents soared. Local contracting companies began to spring up, while local importers of vehicles and machinery saw opening before them immense scope for business. Those who had friends at Court or in the Army were in a strong position to benefit; the whisper of past obnoxious political affiliations could dispose of rivals, including old-established businessmen. For example agencies that had once been the monopoly of an important Armenian businessman, who imported motor cars and spare parts, were prized out of his grasp, because the Armenian was alleged to have had Tudeh affiliations, to fall into the hands of men who had recently gained influence, at Court and in the government. Efforts made by the Plan Organisation under Mr. Ebtehaj directly to control the importation of vehicles, buses in particular, and other development necessities, made little headway against powerful pressure groups.

The first of the two government enactments of 1958 appeared to be aimed at curbing the profiteering prevalent in political circles. As the United States had lent so much of the money on which the boom floated – loans over $200,000,000 and economic and military grants of about $850,000,000 were received from America between 1951 and '61 – it is possible that measures of this kind were taken in response to increasing American anxiety about where the money was going. But, even supposing the Bill was effective so far as members of Parliament and the Administration were concerned, it left other profiteers untouched. Men and, in some high quarters, women continued to speculate in land round Tehran, where values had risen steeply as the city rapidly expanded; and continued in hot pursuit of contracts, some of which were badly executed so that the contractor's fortune could be made. Not even a Minister, and certainly not the Plan Organisation's foreign engineering consultants, were invariably successful in preventing bad workmanship and the use of inferior materials, when the contractor had influential connections. On one occasion a Minister received a beating from an angry contractor. The contractor had the assurance of powerful support and so could behave with impunity.

The Bill, therefore, was limited in its application. It was nonetheless a move on the Crown and Government's part of some significance. Critics would see it as a blind; behind it, worse corruption than before could flourish unchecked. For our purposes it must be taken as the beginning of more positive action from the executive, from the Shah. This aspect was brought into higher relief by the second Bill, presented to the Majlis at the same time and enacted in March 1959. This required all civilian and military officials to submit inventories of their property and the property of their wives and dependents. It was easy in 1958 to scorn a measure of this kind : to say that it would never be properly carried out or only be executed to the detriment of smaller men; and that it, too, was a sop to the Americans.

That it probably was due to American pressure seemed the more evident because the Americans were known to have spoken to the Shah, to the point of committing what might seem grave indiscretion, about private Iranian deposits in United States banks. The Americans were paying and so they tried to follow their dollars to discover what happened to them. Gradually much of the antipathy once felt equally towards England and Russia was inevitably diverted to the 'meddling' Americans; although England's share of opprobrium did not appreciably diminish.

Yet, whatever may have been thought about these two Bills in 1958, subsequent events have given rise to second thoughts. Soon one or two very influential people were in difficulties. Later several senior army officers were under arrest, in connection with such matters as disposal of contracts, purchases of arms and of the materials for building barracks and officers' houses. In 1962 there was still some scepticism about what action would be taken against these men, but in 1963 an influential lady and her accomplices were imprisoned and heavily fined and, by the end of the year, a former Chief of the General Staff was also sentenced.

Something had started in 1958, after all; the Shah had begun a slow progress towards surprising and bold conclusions. By 1962 not the least surprising was his changed attitude to senior officers of the army. Generally speaking since 1953 they had been so pampered that no action against them was conceivable. Ten years later the Shah gave signal proof that, whatever anybody else might think, he no longer thought himself as dependent as before on senior officers. Either he is now aware, to the point of certainty, of the loyalty of a growing, maturing cadre of younger officers; or he is beginning to feel that he can rely more on the nation as a whole. But the people are too fickle; it is more likely to be upon the younger officers and

technocrats that he feels he can rely. Meanwhile, it is the old, some of them aristocratic, officers who can be dispensed with; and who come into a category which extends beyond the army, into the higher ranks of civilian society. This is a category which for many years the Shah must have wanted to weed out, if not break utterly.

Another new departure in 1958 was the Shah's press conferences; the first was in September. This practice may have been copied from those of American Presidents. In the Iranian context it could be seen as another sign that the Shah now ruled rather than reigned; and that he wanted to draw the people nearer to himself. He used one of these press conferences to announce that Iraq's defection from the Baghdad Pact would make no difference to Iran's position or to the strength of the Pact, henceforth to be called the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO). The Iraq revolution in July caused grave concern in the Iranian Cabinet; but the Shah might have been encouraged when he observed the lack of response it evoked among his people.

A by-product of the booming business conditions, however basically unsound they may theoretically have been, was freedom from immediate fear of revolution. Poverty and dissatisfaction were widespread among the masses of the people. There was a slight increase in the number of suicides in the capital, mentioned in the press and marked by the public manner in which they were committed; one man, having first soaked his clothes in petrol, burned himself to death in front of the Minister of the Interior, as the Minister was entering the Majlis. These suicides were of men who could not bear to go on seeing their families without food, at a time of rising food prices and rising rents. On the other hand, those who are suffering the greatest privations do not as a rule plan and lead revolutions. Revolutions are instigated and organised by more leisured, better educated and better-off people than the masses; but employment in government agencies, prospering private concerns, foreign firms and American Point IV, kept many potential agitators otherwise occupied. When in the late fifties Point IV installations began to close down, the staff and labour which became available were successfully absorbed by other development projects. Iran was not therefore ready to follow the example of Iraq; although in a short time relations between the two countries were strained when the Iraq government was accused of harbouring Iranian communists.

Another cause of dissatisfaction with Iraq, to which the Shah alluded in one of his colloquies with the press, was the disputed Shatt al-Arab frontier. It was generally thought that this had been

settled by a treaty of 4th July 1937, when Reza Shah was seeking the good-will of his neighbours for the Sa'adabad Pact. However, although then a short reach of the Shatt al-Arab, four miles in width, had been granted to Iran as far as the Talweg, this was no longer considered sufficient; and there were additional but nebulous complaints about the adjacent land frontier.

It could be that matters of this kind served as pretexts whenever displeasure with Iraq became diplomatically expedient; as with the Bahrein question, whenever it was useful to bring pressure on Great Britain. At a press conference in November 1958, His Imperial Majesty was reported as saying that Bahrein was an integral part of Iran. He would gladly accept the allegiance of the present ruler, as Governor of the island on Iran's behalf. To raise this matter may be taken as a sign, for the attention of local nationalists, that the Shah was not subservient to the West and could, if he wished, show defiance. He had still not won over many of the Iran Party or more extreme nationalists. They may not have been in a position to make a revolution, but they felt no good-will for the Shah. Despite their increasing protestations of complete dissociation from the Tudeh Party and communism, the Iran Party's adherents and its sympathisers, who greatly outnumbered its declared supporters, were no lovers of the West. They believed that the West kept the Shah on his throne. They believed, and would not be persuaded to give up their belief, that the Americans had engineered General Zahedi's *coup d'état* and the Shah's return in August 1953. They believed that, although the Americans were the more ubiquitous and active, behind them and directing their Persian policy were those old enemies, the British, who were considered so much more experienced and astute than the Americans. Finally, the Iran Party was still faithful to Musaddiq. As he receded into the mists of history, the legend of his heroism against foreigners became more lustrous. The Tudeh might be suppressed. The Iran Party, its aspirations stirring in the breasts of numerous professional men and teachers in schools and at the Universities, Under-Secretaries in Ministries, civil servants all over the country, and merchants in the bazaars, had not been suppressed.

During the years immediately under review the clerics were not a serious problem. By 1958 they had assumed a passive attitude, due in large part to skilful handling by the *mujtahid* highest in dignity and influence, Inayatullah Burujirdi, who resided at Qum. Burujirdi was a wise, statesmanlike man. By not infrequently seeking speech with the Shah he gave the impression of actively asserting his religious authority. It was within the convention governing

his exalted relationship with the temporal sovereign that he could confer with, advise and admonish the Shah without leaving his seat. The convention was managed in practice by the Minister of Court going at a sign from Qum, to receive whatever message Burujirdi wished the throne to hear. Mr. 'Ala and Dr. Iqbal, when Ministers of Court, made the journey several times, always with much publicity. This exchange of gestures enhanced Burujurdi's prestige but, although he privately made no effort to conceal his disapproval of some of the regime's policies, he also made it clear that he was in no way prepared to promote disorder. Some of the discontented looked towards Qum for a sign. All that they saw was an adroitly non-committal attitude, adopted with considerable urbanity. Meanwhile in Tehran the divines were feasted on festive days by a busy little man who had long been active for the Shah's cause. These feasts were paid for by the government. The robed and turbaned figures who sat down to the good victuals did not look like the fomenters of a revolt. However, as we shall see, the clerics were once more to try overt opposition.

The Shah had good news to give his press conference when he announced agreement with Turkey for an oil pipe-line to the Mediterranean. Two years before, the 'coming-in' of a 'gusher' oil well near Qum had opened wide vistas of exploiting quantities of oil in the middle of Western Iran, close to the capital and entirely at the disposal of the National Oil Company. The conception of the pipe-line seems to have been directly related to this vision of oil in metropolitan Iran. The agreement with Turkey, which was concluded in October 1958, was to last eighty years. Its realisation would mean that Iran could export oil by a pipe-line almost all the way to Europe. Associated with the idea of a pipe-line through Turkey was the Shah's often reiterated intention of hastening the day when, under CENTO, Iran and Turkey would be linked by rail; Iran was to be an outpost of Europe, with the possibility of travelling directly to London and Paris by train. This aim was brought a stage nearer realisation when on 25th October 1964 the Turkish Prime Minister opened an extension of the Turkish railways as far as Lake Van. There was also to be a connection between the Iranian and Pakistan railway systems. Railway works had already advanced in Iran since Musaddiq's fall; the lines from Tehran to Meshed in the east, and to Tabriz in the northwest, had been completed. Was Afghanistan interested in joining with Iran, Turkey and Pakistan? The suggestion of such an alliance was attributed to the Shah in 1958 and said to have been flatly rejected by Afghanistan.

On 1st June 1958 the Shah assented to an agreement between the N.I.O.C. and the Indiana Oil Company for oil exploration to begin on the Persian Gulf Continental Shelf. Iran was to have a 50 per cent share in all aspects of the venture, and to receive 75 per cent of the profits. A similar agreement with a Canadian Company was announced on 22nd June. In November the Shah said at his press conference that Iran would honour all its arrangements with the Consortium. He could not resist, however, adding that Iran would do this in spite of having concluded far more favourable agreements with Italian and American oil companies.

In utterances of this kind the Shah showed himself both the promoter of his country's economic advancement and guardian of its national rights; it may be supposed that this was one of his principal aims in holding the press conferences. In the eyes of history it must appear that by the autumn of 1958 he was appreciably fulfilling the roles in which he desired publicly to present himself. As for advancement of the economy, economic vitality of a kind undeniably existed. The tempo of business in Tehran was rising. Foreign investors and businessmen were becoming increasingly interested. Set-backs in a few undertakings supervised by foreigners under the Plan Organisation were partly offset by success in others; 1958, for example, saw the completion of the Tehran-Ahwaz oil pipe-line, which was five hundred miles long. The year opened with a trade agreement between Iran and Italy. By 17th April, in spite of vexed political relations, a new trade arrangement with the Soviet Union provided long credit terms, admittedly to promote Iranian purchase of Soviet goods, but nonetheless indicating an optimistic assessment of Iran's economic prospects. But the economic vitality only touched a small minority of the population. In the view of many, the Shah was not yet a beloved benefactor; scepticism or apathy remained the general response to his public statements; bitterness and disenchantment were still rife. Cities like Yazd and Kirman continued to be neglected. In Kirman, poverty was extreme. Yazd was chiefly supported by a local silk manufacturer. He succeeded in making money in other ways in Tehran so that he could bear losses in his mills in Yazd and keep numbers of his fellow citizens in employment. The Plan Organisation's silk-weaving venture at Chalus, in the north, had to be closed because of its inability to compete with the importation of artificial silk.

Attracting foreigners, in the hope of attracting their capital, entailed permitting the importation of foreign goods to the detriment of home industries; machine-made Italian rugs were seen in

the bazaars of Persia. A balance had not been achieved and critics were left with plenty to criticise. The Budget passed on 17th March 1959 gave a total of about £143 million, with a published deficit of approximately £5 million. The Security Organisation (SAVAK) was a reality few could ignore, while other public services remained neglected; the allocation of 45 per cent of the total Budget to military expenses was not unnaturally thought excessive. Iran was a pacific nation; it was suspected that the large army estimates were designed to give the Throne the means of intimidating the people. This was not in fact entirely true: for one thing the Shah had obligations to CENTO; a secondary consideration was undoubtedly his desire to cut a figure militarily outside his country. But members of the opposition thought building up an expensive military machine, in a nation they believed should be neutral, quite unnecessary.

Many Iranians still hated the army and were contemptuous of those who wore its uniform. Educationalists and underpaid school-teachers resented its cost. There were still places where the school children collected grass and sprigs of wild green-stuff for their morning meal in the school playground. On the other hand, the annual rate of economic growth after the reactivation of the oil industry in 1954 was between 5 and 6 per cent. This, however, indicates a proportionately widening gap between the rich and poor. It will soon be our task to see what emergency steps the Shah took to meet the social and political danger this presented.

The situation was made worse by the failure of development plans to materialise speedily. Results were too few to reassure the people and silence the pessimists. The time required to accomplish great engineering works was not appreciated by a nation to whom modern technological problems were unfamiliar. The opposition could take advantage of the slowness of some of the Plan's Organisation's projects; rumours circulated about inefficiency and the wrong advice of foreign experts. One example will suffice to show the fantastic lengths to which some of these rumours went: it was whispered that one expensive project was merely an arrangement for the secret transfer abroad of large sums of money by those in power. The wilder reaches of rumour knew no bounds and always found the credulous. Not least of the Shah's problems was the inherent national tendency towards pessimism, induced as much as anything else by Iran's history in the past century. The opposition fed this pessimism with rumour. In the last chapter we said that the Shah no doubt hoped to obviate revolution by bringing development projects to rapid fruition. But in 1959 it was becoming apparent that this process was not succeeding. The advances that

were made too small, and too irrelevant to the people's immediate needs, to change men's hearts.

Money poured in during 1959, but it was not now to initiate construction so much as to maintain it, and to meet faulty first estimates; costs also continued to rise. At the same time one of the factors which precipitated Mr. Ebtehaj's resignation was the reduction, by $22 million, of the oil revenue allocated to the Plan Organisation. To make up for this funds were provided from other sources, including $47\frac{1}{2}$ million from the United States Development Loan fund. This was repayable (in dollars) in twelve years at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, except for portions of the loan which were spent on agricultural machinery, silos and textile equipment; these were repayable at the rate of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In May the International Bank also made a loan for road reconstruction costs of $79 million. This loan was repayable in seventeen years with interest at 6 per cent. Further, in April the United States Export-Import Bank announced a loan of $93 million for the purchase of diesel engines.

This total of over two hundred million dollars lent in a single year would seem to indicate three things, not all of which are compatible with each other. Firstly the loans could point to the continued fear in Western circles of the possibility of a communist revolution in Iran. Secondly, however, they could prove growing confidence in the Shah's capacity to survive and avert revolution. Thirdly and less controversial would be the idea that loans should be made in order to ensure that development schemes once started should be completed. Yet it seems unlikely that this third consideration would of itself be sufficient to account for the continued willingness of the United States to make large loans. A fourth factor might have been the belief that the West had to keep Iran's economy primed in order to profit from the market which a prosperous Iran might be expected to provide. But this factor and the necessity of helping Iran to finish development projects do not remove the dichotomy of opinion between those who regarded loans as an insurance against the possibility of revolution, and those who lent because of growing confidence in the viability of the Shah's government. These differing views could not be ignored: attention was repeatedly drawn to them by mounting criticism of the generous loan policy in the United States itself, where doubts about the Shah were often voiced.

However, in 1957 a high official of the United States Administration visited Iran and promptly announced that the political situation there seemed to be perfectly stable; a statement which probably, in some quarters, influenced lending policy. As for the opposing

view, it could be argued that if development plans were not brought to fruition, revolution would be the more certain – hence even the pessimists ultimately came down in favour of continuing to make loans and, for once, the rulers of Iran obtained what they wanted in spite of foreigners' differences of opinion about them.

In 1959 it became obvious that Britain and the United States had decided openly to support the Shah. In May he paid a State Visit to England and in December President Eisenhower visited Tehran. In view of the West's increasing financial involvement in Iran, the decision to favour the Shah must have been a delicate one. Had be been overthrown in a revolution, a violent anti-Western swing was to be expected from those who supplanted him, and from whom the West became the more estranged the more they showed faith in him.

In addition, however, to Western political optimism over the future of the Shah, Western banking circles also showed increasing interest in Iranian business. It might be supposed not unnatural that bankers should wish to follow money to a country which was in receipt of such large foreign subsidies; but nevertheless banking developments which began in 1958 must also be attributed to optimism about the country's future. In March 1958 Lazard Brothers and the Chase Manhattan Bank entered into an agreement with Iranian partners for the foundation of a Development Bank and in May, after careful investigations of the prospects, the British Bank of Iran and the Middle East reopened on a small scale in Tehran. In the same month the Iranian Government increased the credit of its own Development and Mining Bank. During the year 1959 Mr. Ebtehaj, after his resignation from the Plan Organisation, opened a private bank with several branches in the capital and was soon doing a thriving business. These developments demonstrate the possibility of a more constructive attitude in the country itself towards the use and mobility of money, with a gradual breaking down of old habits of hoarding capital, be it in boxes under the bed at home or in the vaults of banks abroad. This change of habit could be both a sign of the belief on the people's part in increased political stability, and the means whereby increased stability based on well-founded prosperity might be assured. In the field of Iranian relations with foreigners another new development was observable when an Iranian-English Bank (Bank-i-Iran va Inglis) was established, in which the Chartered and Eastern Bank held 49 per cent of the shares.

This brings us to two matters of increasing prominence in 1959; the question of credit and the promotion of foreign enterprise in

partnership with Iranians. As these have bearing on the future, reference to them will not be out of place.

On the matter of credit there is no doubt that in the years following 1955 and the re-opening of normal commercial intercourse between Iran and the major western countries, Iranian interests began to seek ever more advantageous and, in particular, longer credit terms. The British and American Governments had offered credits to help put Iran on its feet again and, at the same time, to ensure a footing in a possibly expanding market. Iranian businessmen expected private British and American exporters to do what their governments were prepared to do. Very soon the West Germans were also on the scene and, as they had done in Iraq, offering attractive credits. We have seen that, somewhat late, the Soviet Union also came in with credit terms that excited general attention among foreign observers; but for this part of our story, as in other important respects, the Irano-Soviet economic wedlock is a separate item; it only merits reference in the wider context of foreign commercial relations, where, as here, there is evidence of a Russian attempt to compete in a wider field of Iranian commerce, apart from the inevitable exchange of commodities between northern Iran and the U.S.S.R.

Thus between 1955 and 1959 the Iranian importer required increasingly easy credit facilities from foreign exporters. This not only applied to private individuals; it was also characteristic of agencies like the Plan Organisation. In addition to the demand for long credits was the related desire for good after-sales servicing arrangements. The type of goods in question was chiefly machinery. Hence servicing facilities and spare parts were of considerable importance. Accordingly, to sell Iran machines the pre-requisites were : easy credit terms and willingness to station mobile engineers in Iran with spare parts stocks and workshops. This presented some, notably British, manufacturers with what seemed a tall order. The tendency to treat the marketing possibilities of Iran with great reserve was not absent, especially so far as British exporters were concerned. Apart from a generally conservative British approach to pushing goods in a field like the Persian, the British businessman was mindful of what had happened over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Concession in 1951. He was, regrettably it must be said, very suspicious of Iranian business methods, and no doubt the Shah's visit to England in 1959 and the visit of Her Majesty the Queen to Iran in March, 1961, were intended to proclaim a lessening of reserve between the two governments concerned, as a means of lessening mutual suspicions at other levels. Sir Alec Douglas-Home

may at that time have been displaying the same commercial acumen he did so markedly in discussions with President Johnson in February, 1964. He accompanied the Queen to Iran as her Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Nevertheless hesitancy over Iran continues to influence many circles in the City of London; although there were signs by the end of 1963 that Iranian suspicion of Great Britain was slowly on the decline. At the same time, however, oil interests in London are kept in a state of watchfulness by statements by the Shah of the kind to which allusion has already been made; and by old memories not yet entirely obliterated. There are no grounds for supposing that either individual British firms or export groups take guidance from oil companies. On the contrary, in the world of commerce there may well be a tendency to consider that oil interests were too conservative and perhaps too grasping in the past, so that they themselves courted disaster and proved bad businessmen, lacking in foresight and flexibility. Nonetheless any shred of pessimism in such an important area as oil production and trading must be to some extent contagious.

There are, however, two other elements conducive to reserve in foreign commercial circles, especially on the part of those with the most to lose and who, perhaps mistakenly, think they have the least to gain from trade with Persia. One such element is the belief that behind clamour for easier credit lies the assumption that the longer the credit, the more likely it is that the day of reckoning will be indefinitely postponed. The other check is the pause administered to growing confidence in Iran by the Shah's actions in 1961, when he inaugurated what has been widely described as his revolution. That he could do this might have been a source of increased confidence in him and his Government. But the novelty of a revolution led by the Throne is something which does not easily excite foreign businessmen's imagination. At least they feel that they must await the outcome. Since the Queen's visit events have occurred in Iran that have led to more hesitation on the part of businessmen rather than less.

That British export trade with Iran has, however, shown a steady increase can be related to the second factor we set out to discuss : the promotion of commercial and constructional activitiy in partnership between Iranians and foreigners. There have always been those in England who believe in the feasibility, as well as the desirability, of close trade-links with Iran. By 1957 it was becoming clear to many who want closer ties with Iran that the best way of achieving them was on the basis of partnership. The fate of one large British

undertaking operating without Iranian partners only seemed to strengthen this belief. Partnership seemed to offer the possibility of the provision of foreign technical skill without the necessity for foreign technicians and their administrative staffs becoming embroiled in local politics and intrigues, while conversely Iranian partners could look after the questions of liaison with local authorities and handle local personalities. The advantage to the Iranian side would be provision of conditions in which Iranian technicians working side-by-side with their foreign counterparts could gain experience for the day when Iranians were no longer dependent on foreign technical skills and foreign experience in *applying* these skills. In addition to furnishing practical experience, foreign capital would be provided in circumstances of greater assurance where important Iranian and foreign interests were involved on an equal footing. A corollary of this is that Iranians would learn how to deploy their own capital: more movement of local capital could be induced by the infusive application of that of foreign partners. It seems that only on the basis of partnership can relations in commerce between Iran and the West be placed on firm and durable foundations. Only in this way can the vestiges of a sense of inferiority in Iranians, with resultant humiliation and frustration, be removed; it is only thus that relationships can be made to conform with modern conditions generally, between the old great powers and countries that are struggling to emerge from past backwardness and subordination. In this larger context, whatever may be said against it, the Central Treaty Organisation showed in its inception a vigorous stroke of imagination, inspired by Great Britain, and, probably to no small extent, the late Nuri Sa'id of Iraq. CENTO provides Iran with the opportunity to appear in an international role on equal terms with other powers.

From the moment the Shah, on his own volition, joined CENTO, he has made support of it one of the cardinal points of his foreign policy; after all, the alliance offered the attractions of his father's Sa'adabad Pact with the addition of Great Britain's participation, America's firm support and relationship with NATO. Arising out of Article I of the Pact, Iran was able on 5th March 1959 to conclude a bilateral defence agreement with the United States, in common with Turkey and Pakistan. Under this arrangement, the United States, in the case of aggression on any of the three countries, is empowered to take action, including the use of armed forces. In this could be found compensation for the United States not actually joining CENTO.

There were, however, those among the Shah's advisers who con-

tinued in the belief that Iran's 'coming off the fence' might be disadvantageous, and ought at least to be modified by some sort of rapprochement with the Northern Neighbour. Relations between Iran and Russia were strained and Soviet, or Soviet-inspired, broadcasts against Iran's rulers were copious and bitter. Nastiness was blared into the air by broadcasting stations from the Caucasus to Leipzig. An extremely efficient and alert intelligence system apparently accompanied this massive propaganda drive, for the smallest incidents in Iran were being maliciously slanted in broadcasts from far away, within a few hours of their occurrence. The transmissions were powerful enough to reach some of the remotest village tea-shops. A Khan in Baluchistan who took foreign guests out shooting in the morning could hear his peasants being told about it, with absurd and wicked interpretations, as he drove back through the village in the evening. But, apart from the significant fact that there must have been numerous reporters everywhere who possessed rapid means of communication with communist centres outside Iran, it is necessary to bear in mind that to many of the rustics assembled near a wireless-set in a tea-shop the origins, substance and purpose of these broadcasts must all have been equally ambiguous and unimportant: the broadcasts were just another noise, another voice enunciating irrelevant words in rather exaggerated Tehrani accents. Where the information and fiction disseminated had a local reference, it was not impressive: everybody in the village would know, anyway, that the Khan was out shooting with '*ferengis*' (Europeans).

But to an old statesman like Sayyid Ziau'ad-Din Tabataba'i, strained relations with Russia did not seem practical. He had, it will be recalled, hastened the conclusion of the 1921 Treaty with Bolshevik Russia immediately after his *coup d'état* of the same year. He did not, therefore, surprise the writer by saying in 1959 that he held himself mainly responsible for advising the Government to receive a Soviet treaty-making delegation. The delegation arrived at the end of January to negotiate a treaty of non-aggression. On 10th February, it departed with equal suddenness, trailing clouds of recrimination against the Iranian Government. The Iranians were charged with having 'wrecked' proposals which they had in the first place themselves proposed. The episode made nothing any better; but by 1962 and 1963 the old economic wedlock, and the sheer fact of proximity, besides other factors, had worked their accustomed magic. President Brezhnev's State Visit to Iran in 1963 came after twelve months of rising amity and talk of transit agreements and, ultimately, an agreement for technical co-operation.

The other factors included the basic Iranian instinct for preserving some sort of balance in its East-West relations, in an effort to have scope to bring pressures to bear and to maintain independence. Sayyid Zia had been a little premature; in their own good time, the Shah and the Russians have adopted a position similar to the one he advised.

In the meantime the Shah had much to do. The round of state visits continued in 1960 and on 6th November of that year his son was proclaimed Crown Prince. But what began most seriously to engage his attention was the continued division of opinion, and the continued inflammability of some men's thoughts in his realm; and what most seriously revealed these danger spots in the nation's political life was once more the advent of the Majlis elections. Even a Majlis whose term is extended to four years must sooner or later set in motion the excitement of an election. Elections had come again; as events transpired, so had the Shah's moment for a conclusion in the long dialogue between the Majlis and himself.

The elections of the summer of 1960 were to be fought on a party basis. There were a few independent candidates but the contestants belonged in the main to either the *Milliyun* (Nationalist) Party or to the *Mardum* (People's) Party. The new Assembly was to have 200 members elected from single-member constituencies. There was provision for special representation of the Jewish, Armenian, Zoroastrian and Assyrian Christian communities. In modern Iran these communities are small but in a great measure far more prosperous and far less subject to fear of molestation than they have been for centuries. Social and business associations between them and Muslims exist to a hitherto unknown degree. Their religions have been tolerated ever since Reza Shah's insistence on religious freedom. Now their position in society can be seen to have become more assured and accepted than before.

The Shah emphatically declared that elections would be free. Unfortunately the elections that followed were among the most flagrantly corrupt ever experienced. The Shah was very angry and it seemed as if Dr. Iqbal, leader of the *Milliyun* Party, might have indulged in an excess of zeal. On 27th August His Imperial Majesty declared that he was not in the least satisfied with the elections. Two days later Dr. Iqbal resigned as Prime Minister. He had held office for an unusually long time, forty-two months. He was succeeded by Mr. Sharif Emami and the Shah was forced to take the unconstitutional step of asking those Deputies so far elected to resign. Eventually, near the end of the year, orders were issued for fresh elections.

On top of these political troubles, the country's financial position was showing signs of serious deterioration. The deficit on foreign loans was naturally by now very high, while the rise in prices and rents continued. The Shah was warned that no more United States loans would be forthcoming unless a stabilisation programme acceptable to the International Monetary Fund was adopted. Iran was beginning to feel the effects of the slight thaw in the Cold War.

The steps required were reduction in the expenditure of the Central Government ($7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent reduction was agreed upon); reduction in the import of unnecessary goods – the last years had witnessed a great expansion of the import of luxury goods, perfumes, ladies' hand-bags, Paris fashions and, especially, expensive foreign motor cars, mostly American; checks on banking credit; retirement of some of the Government debt and cancellation of the privilege of merchants to postpone payment of customs dues on imported articles. The necessity for these measures was accepted by the Iranian Government. At the same time the Government registered strong protest at the reduction in the price of crude oil, which was made by the Consortium's trading companies in August because the situation feared in 1954, when Persian oil came back into the market, had now arisen: world supplies had exceeded consumers' demands.

The Iranian Government also felt some unease about changes of policy under the new Kennedy regime and began a rapprochement with Mr. Krushchev. On a lower plane, but not without significance, was the conclusion of a trade agreement with Afghanistan. The effort to expand Iranian export trade with Afghanistan was to be a slow and exacting task, but small sales of petroleum soon began and by 1963, after much diligence on the Iranian side and meetings between the Shahs of Iran and Afghanistan, expansion in trade between the two countries was marked. Iran can supply Afghanistan with many goods it has been importing from elsewhere, such as tobacco products; trouble has recently been taken to improve the quality of Iranian cigarettes. The rupture of relations and the closure of the frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan on 6th September 1961 helped to increase Irano-Afghan trade: although the Shah personally intervened to bring about better relations between Pakistan and the Afghan Government.

It is possible that in the Shah's encounters with his royal brother in Kabul, he had observed at close quarters how the Afghans conduct their relations with the Soviet Union and keep a balance between Russian and United States influence. This represents a feat of which they are not a little proud. The way to the culmination of

increasingly warm relations between Iran and Russia, which happened when President Brezhnev made his State Visit on 16th November 1963, had not been achieved easily. When direct Soviet broadcast abuse of the Shah ceased, criticism of the regime from a station calling itself 'The Voice of Iran' continued; whilst it took some time for the Iranian Government, and for foreign observers to forget how, in April 1961, Mr. Krushchev had categorically informed Mr. Walter Lippman that assuredly the corrupt ruling classes in Iran would encompass their own ruin. During President Brezhnev's visit the impression gained was of a slightly reserved cordiality rather than completely unrestrained exchanges of expressions of good-will. The visit shortly afterwards of General de Gaulle appeared to awaken far greater enthusiasm; but it did not follow years of mutual suspicion but, rather, was consonant with a very long cultural association between Iran and France, the way for the visit having been prepared, soon after de Gaulle's assumption of power, when M. Malraux visited Persia to be accorded a warm reception from Iranian intellectuals generally. Nevertheless, although inevitably there were reservations on both sides, Iranian relations with the Soviet Union have steadily improved.[1]

On 23rd July 1960 the Shah announced the *de facto* recognition of Israel. In doing this he was confirming a long-standing Iranian inclination to be friendly with what is probably the most skilled and potentially most technologically advanced state in the Middle East; it is possible that the Shah had in mind the Israelis' success in making the sands of their meagre territory agriculturally productive, for Israel provides an example of the application of modern techniques to the solution of agrarian problems common to the whole Near East. It would seem that during the protracted difficulties of the Majlis elections the Shah's mind turned once more to the question of land reform; and it might have occurred to him that Israeli advisers could help in the implementation of a national scheme for improving agriculture – although in the event, as we shall see, Iranian technicians are themselves admirably coping with the great undertaking which has recently devolved upon them.

The Majlis elections were arousing dangerous feelings. The elections that between January and March 1961 were staged for a second time were considered by many people to be a mockery and voting was apathetic. It seemed possible that an ugly situation might develop. The National Front was active, although its student demonstration in February 1961 was insignificant. The strike of

[1] Assurances were given the U.S.S.R. in 1960 and 1962 that the Shah would never allow bases against the Soviet Union to be established in Iran.

teachers, to the accompaniment of the demagoguery of an old hand from Musaddiq's days, Mr. Darrakhshesh, was much more serious. It broke out on 2nd May. Teachers were demanding higher pay; but their demands and what their action could lead to were different matters and, in view of the latter, prompt steps had to be taken; the Shah and the State Department in Washington were no doubt perturbed.

Dr. 'Ali Amini was the man for the occasion. He had not long before been recalled from the post of Iranian Ambassador in Washington. It is said that the Shah had taken offence at something he had done or said, so that a fortnight elapsed before he was granted an audience. There is no cause for surprise in this. Dr. Amini had never been a favourite. He was closely connected with the old and specifically Qajar élite. His energy and tremendous capacity for realism, as well as his training in economics, had qualified him to be the principal Iranian negotiator in the Consortium Oil Agreement. He had refused to accept the views on economics of his relative, Musaddiq, and had been in a position to tell him so frankly. He was a man of great independence of mind and, being very rich, of pocket. He had an easy, genial, aristocratic way with people, including *the* people; he was quick, able to make rapid decisions. Too wealthy to need to be dishonest, he was too well-established by birth and demeanour to need to stoop for anybody's favour. He and his old mother (who had died in 1956) were well-known personalities: in Tehran everybody knew the name Amini and ill was seldom heard of it. He inspired confidence, and he was well-liked, not to say admired, by the Americans. It was he who succeeded Sharif Emami as Prime Minister in the fateful days of May 1961.

Dr. Amini's Cabinet included none other than Mr. Darrakhshesh, as Minister of Education; and a former member of the Tudeh Party as Minister of Justice. But more important was the inclusion of Dr. Hasan Arsanjani as Minister of Agriculture. After this unusual Cabinet had taken office on 6th May, on 9th May 1961 the Shah dissolved the Majlis and the Senate. Neither was convened again for another two years. There was unrest over the unconstitutional failure to announce new elections, but now the biggest diversion of all was to be embarked upon; the Shah was turning to the majority of his people, that estimated eleven to fifteen million (of a total population of twenty-one million) peasant cultivators. Land reform was to begin in real earnest.

In connection with the two anti-corruption Bills of 1958–9, a statement had been made by Dr. Iqbal's Government that land

reform measures would follow. On 16th May 1960 a land reform law, limiting land holdings to 400 hectares of irrigated or 800 hectares of unirrigated land, had been passed and the leading Mujtahid, Burujirdi, had declared it contrary to the *Shari'a*, the religious law, and to the Constitution. Nothing much more had been heard of it and Dr. Amini's first task was to accomplish the financial stabilisation measures of the preceding year, so that the financial deterioration could be halted and in order to start a Third Development Plan. When this new Development Plan was started, it marked a departure from emphasis on industrial to emphasis on agrarian development.

When Dr. Amini took office, the foreign exchange position was straightaway eased by releases from United States loans, while Dr. Amini introduced stringent measures to stop luxury imports and to prevent currency leaving the country. By early July he could declare the economic crisis over.

Dr. Amini's Government began to make the arrests already referred to, of generals and civilians charged with corruption. But there were early signs of who, between the Shah and Dr. Amini, was to be the master. The Prime Minister's insistence that anti-corruption measures should implicate important people as well as minor officials seems to have necessitated his submission in certain instances to superior wishes. For while generals who had been faithful servants of the Shah were arrested, Mr. Ebtehaj, who had become an outspoken critic of His Imperial Majesty, but was reputedly not in Dr. Amini's black-books, was also suddenly cast into prison. Dr. Amini said on more than one occasion that he had nothing against Ebtehaj, who, he said, was an honest man. But, as one American observer noted with regret, it seemed that Dr. Amini was unable to act as independently as he might have wished.[1]

Dr. Amini, however, was probably trying sincerely to establish a good working relationship with the Shah. This was no easy task; it had long been clear that the Shah would only have him as Prime Minister in exceptional circumstances. In fact his appointment came as a surprise. To effect a working relationship, Dr. Amini no doubt had to give way on some matters in order to achieve others which he considered more vital. As the Shah was now bent on action and had apparently decided that drastic steps were called for, such a Prime Minister could be useful (apart from his popularity with the Americans) and such a relationship had therefore to be tried. It could last just so long as Dr. Amini was prepared to give way.

[1] T. Cuyler Young, *Iran in Continuing Crisis*, Foreign Affairs Quarterly, January 1962.

On the question of land reform it seems that their hearts beat as one; their accord was less, it appears, on the question of allocating or obtaining money for military expenditure. Inability to reduce the Budget deficit was one of the causes to which Dr. Amini's resignation on 17th July 1962 was attributed; but at the time there was talk of his unwillingness to countenance further requests for a loan from the United States for the armed forces. (Of the $63 million received from the United States during his tenure of office, $30 million had been in grants and half of these had been allocated to military expenditure.) Moreover, Dr. Amini, the economist, may have revolted against the continued infusion into the economy of large sums in loans and grants from abroad.

He was succeeded by the Shah's friend, Mr. Asadullah 'Alam, who had been leader of the 'opposition' party and more than once placed in an embarrassing position when this 'People's Party' had taken its opposition role too seriously. Mr. 'Alam remained Prime Minister until the spring of 1964, when rumours of an impending change were realised in his replacement by the youthful Mr. 'Ali Mansour.

In July 1962 when Mr. 'Alam took over it seemed that the land reform initiated by the preceding government in January would continue; Dr. Arsanjani, the Minister responsible for carrying out the reform, continued in office. However, modifications in the reform programme, in its so-called Second Stage, and Dr. Arsanjani's resignation in the summer of 1963, bore unmistakable signs of some brake on the headlong and revolutionary development which the Shah and Dr. Amini had vigorously begun.

The movement may at the outset have been confused by differences in the motives of the Shah, Dr. Amini and the Minister of Agriculture. The Shah, while genuinely wishing to improve the position of the agrarian population and aware of the view of foreign economists that land reform was a fundamental necessity, was also interested in the political aspect; the Shah was making an approach to the agrarian masses of his people.

Dr. Amini, on the other hand, was perhaps more interested in the long-term social and economic necessity of the measure than in its possible political effect in establishing the Shah as leader of a peasants' movement. As for Dr. Arsanjani, the Minister of Agriculture, although suspicion had been voiced that he may have thought of rising to power on a wave of peasant support, it is more probable that he too was more interested in long-term social and economic considerations. As a matter of fact, he tried to restrain the ardour shown for him at the Congress of 8,000 co-operative

delegates who assembled in Tehran in January 1963. He was particularly careful to emphasise that they were not at once to seek or expect new political rights to accompany the land-ownership recently granted them. He showed great awareness of the danger of the next logical step being demanded too soon; once the peasants' rights in the land are conceded, the way to their having a greater voice, indeed, on population proportions, a majority voice in political affairs, is inevitably shortened.

In this context it is appropriate to mention the effort made over the past year to educate the peasants, on the principle of educating 'our masters'. In 1962–3 primary education was still available to only two out of every ten village children. In 1961, although in towns the literacy rate had risen to about 65 per cent, it was still under 15 per cent in rural areas. The Government of Mr. 'Alam has, therefore, organised a programme under the initiative of Dr. N. P. Khanlari, the Minister of Education, for conscripted Army Officer Cadets to live in villages as members of what is called a 'Literacy Corps' or 'Corps of Knowledge'. After they have been given four months' intensive training, the Cadets go out into country districts to teach. They thus present the Army, whose uniform they wear, in a new role, as the people's educator, co-operating with the nation in its enlargement of outlook and mastery of modern ways of living. There is evidence of the scheme's success. It is financed by funds set aside for development and is perhaps one of the best devices so far resorted to for the prevention of revolution.

Dr. Arsanjani's difficulty over the Congress of Peasant Co-operatives lay in the acclaim he received because he was the person chiefly responsible for actually executing the land reform. He had also himself made several provocative statements, in which he berated the landowners and spoke of them as a defunct class of parasites. The slogan of the day was the Shah's *revolution*, but it may have appeared that Dr. Arsanjani believed more fervently than was wise in the substance of such a slogan. It was clear that as leader of the revolution the Shah would not wish the Minister of Agriculture to put him in the shade; Dr. Arsanjani made a hurried trip to Europe for medical treatment and on his return resigned from office on account of, it was claimed, disagreements about how the reform should be financed.

Before concluding with an outline of the progress of land reform, some of the political aspects of the Shah's recent bold gestures must be described. On 11th November 1961, when neither the Majlis nor the Senate was in session, the Shah announced that he had a right under the Constitution to initiate legislation. This claim has been

disputed but nevertheless government by decree was inaugurated and continued until a new Majlis was elected in the autumn of 1963. So many decrees had been promulgated in the meantime that at first the new Majlis was mainly occupied ratifying them to make them law. The Shah's announcement of 11th November 1961 was included in a *farman* he issued on that date, directing the government of Dr. Amini to begin reforms. It was by this *farman* and the subsequent public declarations in which the Shah elucidated his six-point reform programme that he constituted himself leader of his country's 'revolution'. The *farman* required the Prime Minister to make laws for the setting up of village councils; to improve existing regulations for the establishment and operation of town and provincial councils; to make a new civil service law; to carry out reforms of the tax administration, bringing it on to a more equitable basis; to reform the country's educational organisation and generally to reform the administration, emphasis on wider provincial responsibility, the encouragement of more local initiative and the need for more 'social justice' being implicit in the whole document. It seemed as if the Shah were influenced to some extent by the late President Kennedy's approach to problems of social reform; the reference to 'social justice' might be taken to indicate this; these words were often heard in Washington during Mr. Kennedy's first months in office.

Significantly the reference to land reform was not stressed: the Prime Minister was merely instructed, *inter alia*, to execute, if necessary in a *modified* form, the law for the limitation of land holdings of 16th May 1960. It does not therefore seem credible that in November 1961 minds had been made up about how far land reform should be taken in the immediate future. Perhaps it was hoped that the issuance of the *farman* of itself, or coupled with the Shah's subsequent address to rally outside Tehran, would be enough to allay the growing political discontent. This discontent had been aggravated, since Dr. Amini's stringent measures to overcome the financial crisis, by considerable distress in the bazaars, where a number of merchants had gone bankrupt. That these bazaar crises were chiefly due to the lack of foresight of those who now had to pay dues on quantities of imported goods when the market was stagnating did not diminish hostility against the Government. The National Front, and men not hitherto associated with it, became increasingly active against Dr. Amini and, besides commanding the sympathy of the bazaar merchants, became the umbrella under which a number of widely differing elements opposed to the Shah began to gather. Dr. Amini's measures naturally made him enemies

among the entrepreneurs, so that we are again confronted with rightist elements conspiring with elements of the left and of the old Musaddiq 'centre', all to coalesce behind the National Front.

There were further sales of the Shah's private estates to peasants and on 28th September the Shah made the assets of the Pahlavi (Royal or Imperial Estates) Foundation into a *vaqf* or perpetual endowment for educational, charitable, religious, social and public health purposes. The office of chief administrator of this endowment was vested in the Shah and his male issue, while an advisory council, headed by Mr. 'Alam, was to supervise the Endowment's activities.

Discontent and demands for new elections, in effect demands for the resumption of constitutional practice, continued. The Constitution was in suspension and, with respect to the Fundamental Law's provisions that fresh elections should be inaugurated as soon as Parliament is dissolved by royal decree, the Shah was in an unconstitutional position. In the circumstances it made little difference whether or not the Constitution did empower him, as he claimed, to initiate legislation, because in any event the Constitution was not being applied; although in his November *farman* the Shah spared no pains to explain why.

He said that the measures about to be passed by decree would be passed by virtue of his right to commission the Government to do so, 'until the convening of a Parliament based, we hope, on valid elections without the need again arising for annulment of elections due to their improper conduct'. He added that the new measures 'may be temporarily or provisionally executed after our Royal Assent has been given, so that, with a period of trial and the removal of obvious defects, they may be submitted to the legislature to acquire legal validity and confirmation after the opening of both Houses of Parliament'. He spoke too of how 'democratic government means in substance that the people's affairs be assigned to the people themselves as they gradually attain to the requisite degree of maturity; . . .' He clearly had no intention of destroying the Constitution.

He had, however, to hold it in abeyance for a time if any reforms were to be effected. The Majlis had shown for years that it would not approve far-reaching reform. A Majlis confronted with the possibility of land reform in 1951 had helped to put Dr. Musaddiq in power. The new Majlis which the Shah opened in February 1961 was no more the kind he could rely upon for reformative legislation than its predecessors had been. As Dr. Cuyler Young

said of it: 'It was soon apparent... that with few exceptions the deputies were of the traditional type, manoeuvring for the patronage and the spoils of office, hamstringing the best efforts of government, which they ungratefully and glibly harassed, though not from any basic stance of principle'.[1] If reforms were to be carried out, it was clear, not only to the Shah but to many observers, that the Majlis had to be temporarily suspended.

This meant that the land-owners would have no Assembly in which, not so much to plead their cause, as to obstruct any measures designed to destroy their power. They were thus left with the choices of passively accepting what befell them; or joining the growing opposition from the National Front, shortly to be joined by some clerics; or waiting. In large measure they chose the last course: if they waited long enough the Shah might modify his procedure and, in any event, they hoped that time would provide ways of modifying it, if only in part. As we shall see, time has brought modifications to the Land Reform, but not until too much had been achieved for there to be any going back.

[1] T. Cuyler Young, op. cit., p. 276.

Chapter 29

Reforms in Action

BRIEFLY what has happened began on 9th January 1962 when the Council of Ministers passed an expanded and revised version of the Land Reform Bill already referred to of 16th May 1960. The new Bill contained thirty-five articles. Its main provision was to limit a landowner's holding to one village. As many villages are in practice divided among several landholders, since the possession of wide estates in Iran does not preclude scattered holdings of small areas here and there, the unit to be retained by the original landowner was further defined as being equivalent to six *dangs*, because all villages are divided into six shares or *dangs*; and an estate is generally measured in terms of so many 'villages' or so many six-*dang* units. Limiting holdings in this manner obviated the necessity of a complete cadastral survey, which would have taken years to complete and have hindered reform.

When the Bill was declared by the Government to be effective in a given area (government thus retaining control of the implementation of the scheme), landowners had first to declare their holdings and secondly to sell to the Government anything in excess of their permitted allocation. The Government was then to remit the land it thus acquired to the peasants cultivating it, who were to pay for it in instalments during fifteen years. A rub for the landowners was that the price the Government agreed to pay them for land they gave up was derived from revenue receipts in such a way that it reflected the sums in taxes which the landowners had actually been paying. In most instances these were below the amounts due, so that landowners were 'hoist with their own petard' and received less than the land's real value. The landowners were given, in the first instance, ten years in which to hope for all the instalments on what the Government owed them. As one landowner remarked: 'It will probably mean my getting the first instalment and then – "Goodbye!",' but this has not proved true in practice.

In the areas transferred to the peasants, co-operatives were to be set up; only members of co-operatives were to be eligible to receive land. By a decree of 19th February 1961, two milliard rials were

set aside to meet the cost of this programme during the next two years.

The Bill first came into effect in the Maragheh district of Azerbaijan and in other areas of the same province. Landowners not covered by the law were nevertheless in many instances compelled to act in accordance with its provisions; as if in anticipation of this the law provided for the purchase, by the Government, of land not immediately covered by it but offered voluntarily by the owner. Some holders whose estates came below the category of enforced relinquishment nevertheless gave up their lands because, in an area where the peasants were receiving allotments on a large scale, landowners were generally forced by local pressure to fall into line with owners who were compelled to sell their estates: the peasants quickly showed self-assurance and in a number of instances a markedly refractory spirit became manifest. Thus owners dared not visit their villages and, where the programme was being put into operation on some estates, payments of the landowner's dues on others in the same locality were withheld.

In some instances this situation also threatened to make inoperable the provision whereby a six-*dang* allocation remained in the landowner's possession; a holding in a district where land had been distributed was in danger of being untenable because the peasants on it demanded treatment uniform with the areas that had been distributed.

The bill allowed for the exemption of certain types of estate. Orchards, tea gardens and tree plantations were in some circumstances left as before, while if, at the date of the passing of the Bill, land was being worked as a unified and mechanised farm on which peasant labour was employed for cash wages, the law did not apply to it. The law applied primarily to estates operated on the traditional share-cropping basis. Rented land was also exempted until the expiry of the lease or up to a maximum period of five years.

Some landowners, foreseeing the eventual enactment of a far-reaching land distribution programme, had put portions of their estates on to a mechanised, cash-wage footing. In this way they were able to avoid the full effects of the law as its application spread from Azerbaijan to other regions. In Azerbaijan, by the end of September 1962, two hundred and fifty landowners covered by the law sold the required amounts of their properties and forty not compelled to do so followed suit, so that 1,047 estates of 257,609 hectares were sold to the Government and redistributed among 23,783 peasants. Forty-five co-operatives were established with an investment of 16,853,350 rials (210–214·2 rials = £1). In

May of the same year the Bill became operative in Qazvin, Gilan and Arak; in June parts of Kirmanshah and the province of Fars were brought under the scheme, while eastern Azerbaijan was being tackled in September.

By September 1963 there were signs that the scheme had achieved a fair amount of success in Azerbaijan, Gilan, and to some extent in Kirman also. Over the whole country 8,042 villages had been sold to 243,000 peasants, and 2,081 co-operatives established with a total capital of some 250 million rials, or about £5 for each member. About ten per cent out of a total of 11 million cultivators had been affected. There were about a thousand land reform administrators employed to supervise the scheme. The land reform budget was £668,000 for 1962–3 and £548,000 for the following period 1963–4, with £2 and £3 million respectively earmarked in the same periods for paying the land purchase prices by instalments. This showed the average value of a peasant's holding to be £290, and of a village, £2,000.

This was the situation at the end of the first phase of the land reform; the second stage began when an annexe was added to the original Bill on 17th January 1963. The Annexe advanced the scheme's overall purport beyond the political objective of the first stage, which had been aimed at breaking the power and influence, electoral and otherwise, of the landed magnates. The second phase showed increased awareness of the Reform's possible social consequences; stabilising factors were introduced. By Article I of the Annexe landowners were offered three alternatives: to extend five year leases up to thirty years; to sell their land with the peasants' agreement; or to divide it with the peasants in the local share-cropping ratio. The third alternative was retrogressive; actual increases of ploughland resulted from the reform's first stage, but adoption of the third alternative presented by the second stage would have had the effect of reducing the area of ploughland. The Annexe also extended the exemption of land from distribution up to 500 hectares for mechanised farm land and up to 30 hectares for paddy-fields. Article II allowed land held as *vaqf*, that is in religious endowment, to be leased for ninety-nine years. Under Article IV, the period for payment to landowners was extended from ten to fifteen years.

On the whole this Annexe had the effect of curbing the possibility of a complete take-over, whether or not land was scheduled for distribution, by the peasants. It is probable that the temper shown at the National Peasants' Congress on 15th January 1963, and the truculent attitude of many peasant cultivators in various parts of

the country, with the possibility of a Peasants' Party being formed, had made the Government decide to impose checks. Also, once the position of landowners had been appreciably weakened, it was doubtless thought that the time had come to take a little of the sting out of the scheme. If, as some foreign observers are apt to emphasise that it was, the main aim of the Land Reform was political, this aim achieved, the operation could to some degree be slowed down.

It was, as these pages have frequently shown, no part of wise Iranian statesmanship ever to allow one section of the nation to gain too much power in relation to other sections. The Shah may well have thought it necessary somewhat to ameliorate the landowners' position, and somewhat to check the mounting ardour of the peasants. Adjustments were also called for to reassure small-holders, who were the most heavily penalised by the law, for they rarely had alternative sources of income and often lived on their property; although some were employed as minor officials. Among the big landowners, absentee landlordism was the rule rather than the exception. But the position of small-holders, resident on the land, was in some districts rendered very uncomfortable by the law's operation; and stark poverty seemed to many of this class their unavoidable fate.

There was clearly, in 1962 and the early part of 1963, a growing diversity of view in Government circles. Dr. Arsanjani wanted to go much further than it began to appear likely the Shah intended. His speeches against landlords were threatening in tone and the repeated press assurances that the Government had no intention of nationalising house-property in the cities indicated the measure of panic among *urban* real-estate owners: repetitions of this denial showed that the idea of an extension of the rural law reform to town property must at least have been rumoured. It was also necessary to counter the apathy and unproductive attitude which not unnaturally was increasingly prevalent among the owners of land which had not so far come under the scheme. They were depressed and felt that there was little point in profitably working or devoting capital to the improvement of land they might soon lose. On the other hand, there were signs, in Azerbaijan and Qazvin for example, that the assumption of more control by the cultivators would lead to improved production, as the feeling spread that the cultivator was now working for himself and not simply for a small share of what he produced, the bulk going to others. In these areas, however, the cultivator was by and large hard working and well skilled; in regions elsewhere, notably in Fars, there was the threat of a breakdown in production, due to unstable conditions aggravated by the

proximity of tribes; to a spirit of holiday from former controls and exactions; and to a fecklessness and idleness not uncharacteristic of the people of the region. Since September 1962 in Azerbaijan and Gilan there had been a 5–10 per cent increase in agricultural production. But these provinces are climatically fortunate and have always been noted for their agricultural wealth. In Fars, the instability of the situation made many peasants ultimately resent the Land Reform. Round Isfahan the contrary was true, peasants being discontented when the Reform did not reach them.

It was in Fars that a Land Reform official was shot in November 1962, but the episode may not have been entirely due to opposition to land reform; it could have been on account of some old feud. It was immediately used by the Government, however, in a great publicity campaign, directed against obstructive landlords and reactionary forces opposed to the Reform. The murdered man became the Land Reform's first martyr; the Shah was photographed, in an avuncular pose, with his orphaned infant son.

The episode was also linked with the Qashgha'i tribe, always the object of suspicion since its Khans took Dr. Musaddiq's part. The murder occurred in Qashgha'i country near Firuzabad. The tribe was reported in March 1963 to be showing signs of rebellion and severe punitive measures, by land and air, were mounted against it and other southern tribes, notably the Boir Ahmadi. The tribesmen had in fact suffered serious losses among their sheep from pest and were left with the only alternative that presents itself to tribesmen whose flocks have been decimated; robbery. Outbreaks of robbery, and a typically tribal tendency to take advantage of a disturbed situation, caused on this occasion by the Land Reform, brought swift reprisals; it is probable that the Government intended to use the opportunity to break these tribes once and for all.

In January 1963 the Shah did what General de Gaulle had done : the nation was invited to vote on a six-point referendum and his reform programme was subscribed to by an impressive majority. Women were allowed token votes as a preliminary towards complete enfranchisement. The results of the referendum were used to prove that the Shah was the undisputed and popular leader of his people and of the revolution. In so far as it had real meaning, the referendum portended that the masses of the rural population had moved from under the control of a few great families to control by the Government. In other words, the political outcome of the Reform and its acceptance over much of the country meant a wider extension of the Central Government's power.

The form this widening of the Central Government's power seems

to be taking is extension of the hold on the country exercised by technically trained and, therefore, younger civil servants; for the carrying out of the Land Reform needs the presence of experts in modern types of mechanised farming and in the organisation of co-operatives. It should be observed here that an expert British commentator has noted, first, that as a result of Land Reform the peasant cultivators have shown themselves often less primitive than was hitherto imagined, while, secondly, sufficient agricultural foremen have been found for further recourse to foreign (e.g. Israeli) assistance to be required less than at first seemed likely. Implicit in this is the expectation that a great change such as Land Reform will give the bureaucracy, not only a new professional and practical function, but also, as a consequence of this new role, a new technocratic character. The day of the rather cadaverous black-coated, felt-hatted and depressed-looking minor official who used to represent the Central Government in rural areas and was underpaid, susceptible to bribes, bored, sometimes fond of the opium pipe and technically untrained, has passed. There remains, however, the fact that the replacements for this typical minor civil servant in the provinces are young men often closer to European and American modes of thought than to the traditional attitudes of Iran. It may be out of place to lament this change, because it can be argued that the traditional attitudes have left the majority of the Iranian people in a state of privation and backwardness.

Basically, however, it is probably correct to attribute the National Front and the religious classes' opposition to Land Reform to an instinctive fear of the extension of the Central Government's power in a manner resulting in government interference in the people's lives at all levels, and in conflict with traditional patterns of behaviour. In 1963 Iranian students abroad, notably those in the United States, issued pamphlets in which they claimed that the religious classes were *not* opposed to the *principle* of Land Reform. As these assertions were not accompanied by further explanation it was at first difficult to accept statements which appeared to be so much at variance with the truth. Clearly the riots of 1963, in which the religious classes played a considerable part, were against Land Reform, while Burujirdi's statement that Land Reform was contrary to religious law had shown religious opposition to it from the beginning. However, in the religious riots of 1963 there were other factors; the modernising tendencies in general, such as the proposed enfranchisement of women, aroused opposition from the reactionaries, while perhaps more cogent was the risk that religious endowed lands, *vaqf*, would be sequestrated, the religious classes thus losing

a great source of wealth. But in so far as the protest was founded on principles of a higher order, it is probably true to say that it was not aimed at land reform as such, but against the Government's use of arbitrary power and against the new intimacy undoubtedly developing between the Government and the rural masses.

It seems inevitable, when we take all these factors into consideration, that the religious classes would feel compelled to make a stand; above all the traditional balance between secular and religious authority, so heavily buffeted by Reza Shah's reforms, was now, under his son, undergoing a disturbance so radical that its future restoration might be placed beyond the bounds of possibility. The issue might be described as tradition versus modernism, and modernism in the form of a new technical and materialistic control that would supersede for ever the old dispersal of controls under the ultimate guardianship of the nation's recognised spiritual authorities. In the event of a victory for the Shah, a long process of conflict would be finally resolved. Already new dams were being depicted on the postage stamps, and already the reservoirs created by these dams have become the resorts of young men and women who disport themselves with water-ski-ing and show by their every gesture complete freedom from the dictates of ancient codes and restraints. The victory of modernism has begun to seem more than ever assured.

Such a victory, however, would not only resolve an old conflict in favour of the Shah and the modernists; it would also mean increased materialism in a nation which possesses profound spiritual responses against an entirely materialistic view of life. It is, therefore, perhaps premature to say that the old Iran is now defeated and can safely be left to die of inanition, while a new Iran rises in its place. There is the example of modern Turkey to prove that, among the people, old forces die extremely hard; and there are grounds for thinking that in Iran, which has in the past inspired the whole of the Near East with spiritual and cultural values of an exceptionally exalted kind, they may in the end die harder; unless the Iranians, as in keeping with their character they well might, contrive to create a new adjustment, so that forces new and old may be harmonised.

Certainly Iran today is more vital than it has been for a long time; the chances that it will survive in all its characteristic intensity seem more sure than they did, for example, only a decade ago; so that there is every reason to expect a continuation of Iran's charm, and fascinating blend of conservative attachment to ancient lore with ingenious adaptability to new discovery.

IRAN

0 25 50 75 100 125 miles
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 kilometres

N

U. S. S. R.
Armenia
Azerbaijan
TURKEY
IRAQ
CASPIAN SEA
AFGHANISTAN
PAKISTAN
KUWAIT
Neutral Zone
SAUDI ARABIA
Bahrein
Qatar
PERSIAN GULF
Strait of Hormuz
Muscat and Oman
GULF of OMAN

WEST
EAST
AZERBAIJAN
AZERBAIJAN
GILAN
MAZANDARAN
KURDISTAN
KIRMANSHAH
KHURASAN
DASHT - I - KAVIR
(SALT DESERT)
KHUZISTAN
ISFAHAN
DASHT - I - LUT
(SAND DESERT)
KIRMAN
FARS
SISTAN
AND
BALUCHISTAN

ALBURZ MOUNTAINS
ZAGROS MOUNTAINS
HAZAR - I - MASJID MOUNTAINS

Krasnovodsk
To Baku
Barzargan
Maku
Nakhjavan
To Boku
Sarband
Farsaband
R. Aras
Julfa
Khoi
Shahpur
Marand
Sufian
Ali Bulagh
Rezaiyeh Lake
TABRIZ
REZA'IYEH
Ziveh
Sarab
SAVALAN MOUNTAINS
Maragheh
Mishkinshahr
Ardebil
Lankoran
Astara
Hashtpar
Hirobad
Bandar Pahlavi (Enzeli)
Mianeh
Miandoab
RASHT
Lahijan
Mahabad
R. Zarrineh
R. Qizil Owzan
Takab
Zenjan
Ramsar
Shahsavar
Naushahr
Chalus
Mahmudabad
Babulsar
Kenardaria
Amul
Babul Shahi
SARI
Ashurada
Bandar Shah
R. Gurgan
Gurgan
Behshahr
Bistam
Shahrud
Damghan
Semnan
Qasvin
R. Shahrud
Takistan
Gachsar
Shems
Karaj
Damavand
TEHRAN
Razan
Yaramin
Garmsar
Saveh
Baqirabad
TEHRAN
Hamadan
Tarkhuran
Qum
Salt Lake
Ashtian
Malayer
Arak
Kashan
Mahallat
Gulpaigan
Maimen
Dehlir
Ardistan
Anarak
Jandagh
Ribat-i-Pusht-i-Badam
Na'in
ISFAHAN
Ardekan
Yazd
Yazd-i-Khwast
Dehshahr
Mehriz
Abadeh
Abarquh
Shahreza
Shahr-i-Kurd
R. Zayand hrud
Kuhrang
Izzeh
Masjid Sulaiman
Lali
Diz Dam
Dizful
Andimeshk
Diz R.
Shushtar
Darkhazinah
Karkheh R.
Kut-al-Amarah
R. Tigris
Naft Safid
Haftkel
Ramhormuz
Khalafabad
Aghajari
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R. Karun
Basrah
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Abadan
Bandar Mashur
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Dogunbadan
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Fao
R. Shatt-al-Arab
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Bushire
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Zabul
R. Helmand
Nusratabad
ZAHEDAN
Mirjavah
Taftan
To Quetta
Khash
Jalugho
Basman
Paskuh
Dehak
Kuhak
R. Bampur
Bampur
Iran Shahr
Sarbaz
Khairabad
R. Nahang
Chahar Bahar

LEGEND

- Paved road
- Gravel road
- Dirt road
- Railway
- (under construction)
- International Airport
- Other Airport
- Ustan centre
- Ustan boundary
- International boundary

IRAN is divided in modern times into 13 Provinces or Ustans, referred to by their number, starting from Tehran, Ustan One, as well as by the name of the old provincial area or the seat of the Ustandar, Governor.

JRF

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